

DEWDROP'S TRANSLATION OF THE HOMESTUCK CLASSPECT SYSTEM, FOR BOTH ARTICULATING SELF-REFLECTION AND PSYCHOLOGICAL UTILITY

Q: tldr wtf is this

A list of personality "classes" from Homestuck, meant to help people identify friends and themselves. Knowing the comic is irrelevant, but I will keep that kind of chatter (along with my more personal anecdotes) in this style of text.

Q: sorry this is a psychoanalysis thing based on what again

Homestuck is a webcomic primarily created by Andrew Hussie, which is about a couple dozen teenagers finding themselves and what they believe in (and brutally murdering betty crocker). Among the misadventures, a large crux of the comic is a personality system - which seems to draw inspiration from a few sources, though Jung's personality system the heaviest. I know his work's contentious, and I don't know everything Andrew Hussie read (hell, maybe no Jung involved at all and they just found similar conclusions), but I am here to make the claim that it does appear to actually apply to real people; not in some kind of Hogwarts Houses "nebelous vibe" way, but a genuine psychological feature our brains develop into. While it's not the be-all-end-all of psychology, it still covers enough to be useful - and what it does cover can be unsettlingly accurate, what with how many surface traits lead back to the same inner turmoils, justifications, and speeches. While I'll keep the flavourful terms like "Derse" and "Prospit", and the medieval fantasy titles, I stand by this system being applicable to real people - you, and anyone you know.

Q: jung was kinda wacky tho

I'm not batting for everything he came up with; I don't see classes as a spiritual thing, only a mundane mechanism by which the brain processes its spiritual leanings. I'm here to defend and articulate what Homestuck put forward...and, admittedly, with a declaration of legitimacy even the author didn't. Personally, I think Hussie's shy - hell, I think half the comic might be a confession of them stumbling in selling an early prototype to their friends - but what matters is that I am willing to make a claim of legitimacy on my own. With that in mind, I'll be clear: I have zero credentials in psychology whatsoever, and I never went to college. I can't blame you if that scares you off. I probably wouldn't trust someone like me in your position either, when it all sounds like so much spiritual homeopathy nonsense. I hope, at least, to earn that trust.

statement: people are more complicated than all this

Yes and no. Probably. I've seen this system demonstrate a remarkable capability to whittle people's philosophies to inarguable cores, ascertain what secrets and complexes they're predisposed to hide from people, and predict their paths for development and downfall. There's a math to it all - a flat math of reoccurring conniptions, reoccurring imagery, reoccurring catchphrases - that holds up, even if its scary to take in. Still, the expression of those directives, the political leanings, or degree of obsession, those can all vary and change over time as we really do develop as people and learn from our mistakes. I'd say with confidence that the most distinct archetype qualities come from those who refuse to grow up or leave their echo chambers, even if the fundamentals don't seem to shift. Is it so important that they do? That we all remain in some state of Tabula Rasa? If you keep believing that, you're just going to assume everyone else runs on *YOUR* particular logical framework, and they only need to hear what you want to hear to come around. My experience has been that people improve - but they don't change. Not in the ways we so desperately want them to, let alone ourselves.

Q: okay so how are you gonna prove this

3 paragraphs going over the qualities, one each for a binary variation of flavour per class, some poetry, 3 more for some inversion shadow self bullshit, and then a whole section for context sensitive cross-examinations. I'll also include anecdotes, as mentioned, along with media examples that I think work well as class examples, but only in this style of text; a distinction between what I will say with confidence, and otherwise.

Q: your plan to make a webcomic personality system sound legitimate is to list your favourite TV characters?

There are numerous ways to discuss examples of classes in this impersonal format, but they all have their drawbacks. Obviously I hope the plain text does enough to conjure images and evoke old memories that you can piece together yourself, your friends, and family. Our real relationships and experiences are the most important foothold in spotting these patterns in others - and, on that note, I will try to mention my own experiences with people. Not all of these are so explosive or vivid; some could go no further than "I knew a guy like this, moving on". Others are just...more personal, where even if the drama is good data, I have reservations about putting it into public display. What personal stories I share are, for one reason or another, ones I can live with.

On those same points, I'm against discussing celebrities or famous historical individuals, as while they ARE real people that the masses are familiar with, and I've DEFINATELY made my judgements privately amongst friends, it's...just, offputting to me. It's prying too far on people with enough of a spotlight already, and it certainly feels like a recipe of disaster if I get anything wrong too. I have only one exception, but that's for the end of the document - and, in my defense, one featured as a character in Homestuck already.

Fiction is tentative. Now so long as people try to write believable characters that we are meant to empathize with, it's inevitable that it will at least *stumble* in the direction of this already existing framework of personality. But there are no hard ceilings in fiction, which can lead to blurry chimeric patchworks of multiple classes, or classes so boxed into a corner from public perception that it's hard to disentangle it as anything other than a stereotype - or insult. I will name quite a few characters, and while it's also inevitable that this will reflect on my narrow field of interests, I am trying to pick those that are, at least, never more than a quick internet video away from understanding their "vibe". If I pick them at all, I am asserting that they are at least *adequate* in mirroring the wants, whims, dreams, and fears of the very real human beings I'm focusing on. In a vacuum, this makes it an approach with no downsides, but this document must unfortunately argue for its own legitimacy alongside the would-be academia, and that puts a hard cap on how many times I can rant about a cartoon you've never heard of.

Q: also back up did you say poetry

I won't pretend some parts aren't for me. Still, the origin was practicality; I was trying to close out entries with some musings on the mythological title. Someone I showed it to (who is, admittedly, a fuckass), said it made it all more confusing that this was supposed to be about real people. Not wanting to overhaul the structure or naming conventions, I just doubled down on the esotericism, serving the emotional purpose I wanted it to have while leaving better descriptions like these to frame things. There were alternatives, but...like I said, some things are just for me. And there will be (or is) a version of this document that does not include them. Still, for parts of ourselves so important to art and meaning, built from a comic that celebrated that, it does not feel entirely out of place to wager some of my own work.

Q: are you sure you're not schizophrenic?

I have responded to the concerns of my friends by going directly to the best British Columbia has to offer and receiving an hour long interview regarding my mental health. Their conclusion was "0% definitely not schizo". I'm not ruling out that they messed up and missed something, but I'll continue making my claims with confidence in my own sanity - and again, I've won over some skeptics in my circle, gotten some hard reads on past and future personality phases, put people of the same class in front of each other to spurn some funhouse mirror shock...yeah, I'm pretty secure here.

Q: what's the point?

Whatever you want; we're whittling down and highlighting the impulses of what individual people consider artistically and spiritually resonant. I'd argue it's about empowering the voice of an individual's creative spirit, while making them more resilient to hard times and trauma that may have influenced them. I am, however, predisposed to believe things like that, so your mileage may vary. I will make judgements based on the basic principles of "Be excellent to each other", "Treat people the way you want to be treated", and "Labels that point out bad habits should have us reconsider bad habits and not labels".

Q: so where'd all these descriptions come from if the comic didnt explain everything

My initial source: <https://homestuckexamination.tumblr.com/post/168160703234/homestuck-mythological-class-quiz>). Ultimately I found it too mystical in certain places, and in others simply failing to acknowledge the real complexities of why certain classes are what they are. Homestuck and it's spin offs are obviously major sources too, but the absolute standard is the real people I've met. Young and old, rich or poor, fans or strangers, I've done my best to have a large sample size and corroborate with others.

Q: the comic says some are gender specific. what are you saying?

Historically I can never seem to tackle this subject without annoying someone, so let me make this as clear as I can: first and foremost, trans rights are human rights, and I'm NB myself. Secondly, it is my professional stance (in as much professionalism as I can muster) that the door is open on anything, and I do not have the resources to say a class is AMAB or AFAB exclusive in any conclusive fashion. I will, however, admit that all but two classes appear linked to birth gender in every case I've seen, and persist through transitions, hormones or not.

Again, if I can be clear: trans rights are human rights, and I have no patience for anyone who wants to make an argument on "gender essentialism", let alone what this all means to it. Every argument made from the progressive voices who are much smarter than I am already stands above anything I go over here. Trans women are women, trans men are men, non-binaries are whatever they want, sex isn't gender; ergo, trans people are not invalidated by gendered classes, gendered classes are invalidated by trans people. While it would all be alot to go over now, when we get to class inversions, it should be clear that a regressive viewpoint on these personality types will only hold less water, *especially* to classes that fit best to that culture's framing of men and women.

I believe this. I do. I also hope I can reach to progressive voices who still haven't swallowed "your permanent personality foundation is linked to your chromosomes" - because I get it man, I do *not* have any good way to introduce that. Again, I'm NB, and while that doesn't absolve me of any accusations of hypocrisy, I have to insist I am at this position from these observations and not my morals...because those morals are *very directly pointed* at equality and accomodation. It *is* inconvenient to some of the arguments one has to make for human dignity, but it isn't irreconcilable. If we reject it on the principle that Tabula Rasa *sounds* better, then we only make facts into shackles, and give ammunition to our enemies. There are trans people who will belong to AMAB or AFAB classes and display those attributes, and I don't want to see some conservative shithhead able to point those traits out (whether they're aware of this system or not) while the opposition sticks their head in the dirt and says there's no such thing. Look, maybe I'm wrong, maybe the doctors failed and I really *am* crazy, but even in this nebulous system there's more than enough to validate queer lives rather than invalidate.

Take it far enough, and you can uproot alot of gendered stereotypes by dissecting the system and following threads. "Men are brave and violent", "women are irrational and manipulative", but not only are there obvious exceptions to those reductions, the classes most likely to exemplify them (whether intentional or otherwise, to say nothing of multiple unrelated qualities being lumped in as gendered) have (in all but one case, which itself is still vulnerable to many other arguments) chromosome counterparts through inversion who do the *same fucking things*, with different conclusions on what's masculine, feminine, butch, sissy, blah blah whatever. Really, dysphoria only makes these qualities MORE loose and malleable. The lines between "manly" or "motherly" protection are thin enough a stiff breeze could blow them away, where the sexist baggage assigned to it only justifies itself with itself, entirely seperated from the real truth. At first glance, this system looks like it might back up gender essentialism; *keep* looking, and all those hateful myths corrode to dust, I promise you.

Q: what about other personality systems?

I'll say this: there are 16 classes here, and I know that's a reoccurring number in more than a few circles. Even if you double it to 32, we still got Prospit and Derse variations...but, all of that's stuff I have even less experience with. I know Homestuck, and while it's likely that (at least some) classes match between different texts, this model is still useful in both the aspect business, and the intensity escalation and inversion business; which classes are related to others, and which are outright mirrors, certainly seems even more contentious.

Q: you're using semicolons too much. and incorrectly.

I type how I talk. The rest is a moral obligation to refuse capitulating.

HELLO (IT BEGINS)

Welcome to the Brochure. Here's what will be covered:

Classpect: In the simplest terms, a classpect is a foundational catalyst of a human personality, establishing many of our chronically perceived obligations, aspirations, and conniptions. The name combines "Class" and "Aspect", to which there are 16 classes and 12 aspects, which can manifest in seemingly any combination therein. The possibility of gradients, or the ability to change classpects, will not be ruled out entirely, but will not be dwelled upon. Classes, aspects, and combinations thereof are not an "opt-in" theatre archetype, to be confused with the faces we may wear in different contexts, or even a vague judgement of our vibe or deeds; this document will insist that classes are a material, tangible thing, and that any truth in the system is likely already present (in at least some regard) in existing psychological frameworks and fact.

Again, I'm not very optimistic on the matter of middle-ground and exeptions. Probably best not to treat it as an "optimism" thing anyways - is what it is.

Also, I am not batting for legitimacy on actual zodiacs. Even if any amount was true (and that is a CONTENTIOUS fucking argument for alot of people), it's the bottom of the barrel next to all the other stuff we're talking about.

Aspects: The delicious contrasting flavours of "what the world is all about", 12 in total. On it's own, this will likely seem harder to assume legitimate than the rest, but it makes more sense to address this first before we tackle classes. Aspects are the elements (figuratively speaking; this is simply brain chemistry) classes engage with, with so much phillosophy built from their cultivation and combination. While everyone is capable of conceptualizing, appreciating, and believing in any aspect, one is "bound" to you, and this unsolicited favourite is likely already the backbone of how you justify your place in the world, or the world itself.

Classes: The meat of this document. Classes are the most immediately recognizable parts of both classpect descriptors, and often the personalities we meet in our day to day. In the broad strokes, classes create a visceral “type” of a person, which we can often recognize but shrug off as coincidence, contextual states of confidence, or outright pathologies. Again, while this document will not rule out the possibility of classes not being permanent, it will go forward with the (not unfounded) assumption they are. On the nature of pathology, there are certainly enough contradictions to write off that personality disorders are 1-1 matches for any of these. Public perceptions of any number of mental disorders can often be misattributed to classes, who can ultimately manifest with any combination of them, or none. Also relevant, it should be noted that the classes depicted here are born from a first world, western perspective, aiming most at the experiences/attitudes of 15-30 year olds. Different people in different places at different ages will all have incentive to manifest their class with variation...though, again, it still seems to be a permanent undercurrent, no matter how much or little we pile on top of it.

There are 16 classes, of which this document will provide descriptions of 14 initially, addressing the last two only after all the finer details are handled. Every class is defined by a **verb**, summerizing (again, summerizing, the actual details are more complicated) how they relate to their aspect, and frequently how they will wield that in the grand effort of helping themselves and/or helping their friends. On that note, Classes have several modifiers: “active” and “passive” classes (to which there is always a pair), tiers of intensity, and a “sway”. Here is a brief description of each, but it should make more sense in practice (really, most of this will):

-Active and Passive: The ways a class “**verbs**” their aspect come in two flavours per verb, depending on whether the perspective is locked internal or external. In the case of the former, there are the Active classes, who relate their internal symbology to their personal story, where even gestures to make that identity benevolent are hamstrung by an inability to ignore personal gain; even martyrdoms can take attention away from giving someone else the spotlight. For the latter, there are Passive classes, concerned with the wants and wills of others before all else. This makes them innately empathetic (or at least, diplomatic), but limited by all the human error that comes with *guessing* what other people are thinking, while selfishness can still manifest in a personal identity convinced it has other priorities. If this seems contradictory, it very much is...but it often won't seem that way to the individual in question.

-Intensity: Classes are divided into 4 sets of 4, with each creating it's own "tree" of progression...or, regression, and ultimately neither. The nature of this document will frame this with a narrative of escalation - "intensity" - but this is more for convinience. While these classes certainly exist in this arrangement, any implication of hierarchy is baseless hypothesis; more intense classes may be more prone to seek and speak greatness, this does not guarantee that they'll succeed, that they should, that they'd even be *good* at it, or that this is all they are capable of. One could just as easily position these more intense classes as "imbalanced", speaking about them first before addressing calmer archetypes as more "harmonized" iterations. Of course, this too would be another subjective flourish, still baseless to a system that does not inherently indicate an actual rank...and if it *did*, such an evolutionary intent is owed no deference. Even ignoring whatever "principle" could exist in regards to "human nature", our own modern society is unlikely to function any better if run to the (again, purely hypothetical) intent of caveman genetics. Classes will be described as a progression, of "Class 5 is Class 1 squared", but this narrative is simply to make things more digestible. Please keep this in mind.

Given everything I've learned, I imagine Hussie and I would argue on this.

Defining classes as a see-saw was an interesting model. I've seen a few. They're all wrong, mostly due to adding too much myth to the Master classes, and trying to build around them. I will make my case as best I can, but I also wanted to mention a friend of mine (who wanted to be anonymous, but still wanted credit) who came up with a better model. See, she figures low intensity classes are another kind of "extreme" as much as the high intensity ones, and devised her own model: basically, a globe. Cut it into quarters like an orange, and they'd represent active attunement, passive attunement, active adaptation, and passive adaptation, with the lowest and highest intensity at either end. It's a nice way of having true parity, not implying any kind of "true middle" (if it exists at all, I'm reserving the name "monk"), and pointing out that high extremes and low extremes have alot in common where a see saw would put everything else between them. She's clever. I like her.

-Class "Sway": Every class will manifest with a particular binary, creating two variants of each. The names "Prospit" and "Derse" are lifted from Homestuck's lexicon; "Sun and Moon" or "Order and Chaos" are entirely suitable replacements with a more traditional vocabularly. "Extrovert" and "Introvert" might sound applicable, but feel far more out of place next to certain classes too quiet or loud to serve as examples. "Dog Person" and "Cat Person" are equally inconsistant, but may still help in ballparking the general trends. To summerize these two attributes *very* briefly...

--Prospits (or Prospitians, but that's a mouthful) have a very clear idea of "good", and little tolerance for the alternative. They may not think of *themselves* as virtuous, but even those with self loathing will rarely pretend to be anything else - what would the point be? They live in the moment, express (or withhold) their emotions straightforwardly, and are often slow to change their mind. The world

might not be black or white, but Prospits would certainly *prefer* to deal in those terms; they can be stubbornly idealistic, even if that's not actually solving any problems, or matches the "ideals" of anyone else in the room. Again, none of this is *precisely* optimism or pessimism, but contemplating the greater nuance or potential of Prospits is ultimately a very un-Prospit thing to do. If Prospits do wrong, or if their close friends do (even to the Prospitian in question), they may be genuinely surprised to have it all pointed out...but as said, they are still rather slow to change their mind.

--**Dersites** have a very clear idea of "evil" - or at least, the web of different perspectives and contexts that would rush to define what ultimately can't. While they are certainly more likely to engage in malice than Prospits, this is more from their own particular resignations, permanently predisposed to assume the worst of themselves, strangers, and often society as a whole. This can result in self-deprecation, gloating, and masquerades, often oscillating between all of them in their own fuzzy fog of irony, sarcasm, and sadism; misdirection as armor, misrepresented as misdirection for the sake of itself. Chronic neurotic self-examination leaves permanent cracks on whatever classpect defines them, in an affect full of asterisks; if they don't believe anything for sure, why should you believe them? These are not healed scars, but bleeding wounds, as Dersites frequently find themselves with a familiar gnawing that they are unfinished people. Sure, they could look for greater truths and potentials of their soul, but it's scary to imagine there aren't any - so better to settle as the devil you know yourself as.

I think it'd be pretentious now to invent new words when so much here is dependent on Homestuck proper. I'm here to build and extrapolate Hussie's work, not hijack it (probably), and I'm perfectly proud of the effort I've exerted here anyways. I got too many people in my life telling me I should make this more "mine" - my signature's written all over this for anyone to notice, in every way I care about measuring.

That's the class crash course over. Moving on.

Inversion: In which it is revealed 50% of your time has been wasted in regards to aspects and classes, but we gotta build up to it. Don't worry, Prospit and Derse are still static.

My only issue with the globe model is that it implies and even more inverted-inversion, where the see-saw (or rather, a properly organized see saw) better illustrates into how standard-inversion functions. I mean in the globe model, they're touching now, so I guess...blah, use whatever model you want, so long as we understand what we're talking about - and no, I have no arguments with the aspect wheel.

Discrepancies: A long, disorganized list of side-by-side case studies regarding classes who could be confused for each other. This is especially important to particular permutations of classes that veer off-script from their initial descriptions, in the name of showing that

they haven't actually quit their script altogether - shuffle the cliches, but still checking all the boxes.

Let's get this ball rolling.

ASPECTS

(MOODS, VIBES, MEMES)

An "aspect" is, to summerize, a platonic ideal: a rock-bottom primordial soup of values and imagery, reoccurring ad infinitum in a way that blurs nature or nurture. Each is locked to an antonym, creating an axis and language of compromises, intended or otherwise. It has no innate conclusion or arrangement, be it personal or political, beyond what we make of it. People, countries, and religions are all (usually) more than one ingredient, sure, but no matter the composition, aspects are that essential foundation of a human's sense of purpose.



Most everyone can intuit an aspect innately, agreeing and internalizing at their discretion (peer-pressure aside), but one is still locked in - "bound" - as the favourite flavor the psyche will define itself by for years to come. Of course, this "binds" one to the opposed aspect as well, brewing all sorts of antagonism to the world (and shame to ourselves) when we recognize (or project) these "wrong" values. Mythologization and fantasy buzzwords aside, don't lose sight of the fact that this is *tangible*. Barring some permutation of brain chemistry, YOU, reading this, are currently on one of these axes, stitched together with beliefs so default they may not be recognized as beliefs at all; even your skepticism may have an identifying flavour.

I don't believe in a Collective Subconscious, and I am not selling one to you. I believe in patterns, I believe in human nature, I believe all of this is just genetics bubbling vague shapes which we wild animals arrange and decry at our leisure. Take a fair look at yourself, and pretty soon it won't matter what I believe, compared to what is.

The following are descriptions on both what compromises an aspect cocktail, and what mannerisms and conniptions those bound to it are likely to display. The precise way people extoll, suffocate, embrace, or encourage their aspect (let alone the opposed one) will vary, but even the furthest extremes are not immune to these generalizations, and always moreso the further one delves into self-reflection with so much "What I learned as a child". If you're trying to spot yourself, here's a tip: the antonym that disgusts you is often clearer than your actual figurehead.

THE WAVE RETURNS TO THE OCEAN

SPACE: Creation, Choice, Creative Expression, Will of the Universe, Surrender, Art, Ambiance, Meditation, Candy, Detachment, Abstraction, Dreams, Cold, Acceptance

NO ONE LIVES FOREVER

TIME: Destruction, Volition, Retaliation, Spite, Hunger, Death, Mechanisms, Material Reality, Inevitability, Endings, Conflict, Chaos, Profanity, Heat, Meat, Gasoline, Cruelty

Defining the extreme points on the axis of "Is" and "Isn't", Space and Time are aspects that overthink the essentials of existence; Space is a masturbatory belief *about* beliefs, where Time is a paradoxical belief *against* beliefs. The Space aspect is less "vanilla", and more "ice-cream flavoured ice-cream", venerating the rainbow tapestry of the human imagination, promoting a free-flowing creativity with no stakes, ownership, or pain. Its aesthetic signature defaults to gardens, withdrawal, and meditation - which basically either hits Buddhism

directly, or by accident. They regard our ability to dream, to create, and to *choose*, as the most noble ability of a living being. A nurtured imagination helps them easily find new perspectives to uproot whatever's at face value...if, perhaps, too easily convinced what *they* came up with is the new "correct" interpretation. All this flowery mumbo-jumbo (possibly involving actual flowers) makes the Spacebound innately amicable, with the snag that they often don't seem to understand why everyone else *isn't*. There is often an expectation that the strife of others is to be totally and cleanly solved by catching up to *their* wavelength; it's certainly easier to advocate letting go of earthly attachments when you're not the one attached, or aren't defaultly inclined to make attachments, or just won't *admit* the attachments you take for granted. Barring some real introspection (or, maybe more importantly, extrospection), the Spacebound are *inventing* the greater tranquility everyone should "surrender" to, which is far more likely to reflect their class rather than genuine wisdom. Pride and cruelty are never *gone* from the Spacebound, only coated in an aesthetic of the opposite, chasing purity when harmony looks like too much work.

It feels like it'd be more work to talk about Space *without* mentioning Buddhism in some regard. Mind you, I don't think many other religions could align themselves with one particular aspect, and I'd wager it'd end poorly if you felt it obligated to force connections and bask in whatever twisted picture you created, and espouse what destinies you drew from it.

It's just for Buddhism specifically, really. All the Spacebound all seem to find it eventually, and most of us only recognize the Space aspect when tied to that particular sect of scripture, with all the baggage that comes with it. I think it's important to understand that Space is a primal, raw ingredient of thought that can exist in *plenty* of arrangements...and if I can nakedly express my biases, I think *any* aspect in complete totality is, if nothing else, unhealthy. Buddhism certainly wants the whole fucking pie.

Returning to the earlier analogy, one could call the Time aspect "cone-flavoured ice-cream" - which is to say, an ideological fixation on the material world, excluding the messy opinions that distract from survival in the present moment. The snag is, Time is still ~~ice-cream~~ a belief, deifying nihilism to the point that dog-eat-dog becomes dogma. This catalytic, cataclysmic node of thought venerates the immortal spite of the human infestation, in a profane mockery of beauty itself; fire and lightning, flesh and machinery, combustion and cannibalism, and all the rest of that rock 'n' roll imagery. Now, all of this isn't to say the Timebound themselves are inherently feral; rather, just predisposed to believe it'll always come down to grit on anything that matters. This viewpoint and its expectations leaves them in a state of permanent unease: the world is cruel, people are fragile, art is meaningless, and all things are temporary. Far from Space's belonging, the Timebound fear the world is out to get them, and rationalizing what hurts you and yours is wasting effort you could spend doing something about it. Still, while the good intentions of

“righteous and necessary violence” can manifest through this primordially blunt worldview, “death and destruction” is seductive in the naked admission of its own vapid ignorance; that so much in life does die is harder to live with than should. Pragmatism or thrill-seeking are possible permutations of the aspect, and unfortunately equally valid as “the weak will serve the strong” horseshit, waiting to freefall into omniscidal wrath with the right shove. Even reasonable Timebounds will burn more bridges in life than they’ll build - or at least, be convinced that they and humanity are capable of nothing more, no matter how empty that makes them feel. Ultimately, neither Space nor Time can rid itself of the other, in individuals or in life; they are two halves of the human spirit, and without compromise, they are *both* broken.

Neither of these are Good and Evil - but if you’ve read the “Hero with a Thousand Faces”, you’ve heard of someone who would make that distinction. The quote “Lecherous fever of the organic cell” speaks to the essence of the Time aspect, but it is meant with such hostility...and, reluctantly, I will admit for good reason. I won’t pretend that these aren’t familiar talking points - “might makes right”, next a dark proclivity to ideas of genetic superiority. All these reoccurring arguments on human nature, surrounding a platonic ideal that keeps coming back to killing and eating meat; if I had to guess, it is the survival instinct deified, permanently intertwined with imagery of fire and lightning that danced on the eyes of our ape ancestors. You could go deeper, and say this whole axis and its values are some reflection of our molecular foundation: of burning stars fighting the infinite vacuum, raging against entropic oblivion for their own equally pointless existence. Maybe. Maybe not. It’s fun to think about.

Still, even with all that said, the aspect obsessed with cannibalism is its own predator. “Evil”, maybe, but “evil unto evil” - justice and cruelty, one in the same, and the resolve that comes with accepting that you’re someone else’s idea of evil. Might *doesn’t* make right, it just shuts up the opinions the Space aspect would try to forgive and forget with - and regardless of how often you employ that violence, there’s still peace and beauty in an aspect that was less the opposite to those things so much as an alternative. Time is contentment in precisely the pain and profanity that define discontent, sympathy to the refuse tossed aside as “wrong”, and its own ideological power in the plain practicality of every piece of the world that isn’t up for debate - “right makes right”.

Then again, I’ve got skin in the game on this one. Go Team Gevurah.

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LOVE CONQUERS ALL

HEART: Subjectivity, Soul, Singular Perspectives, Persona(lity), Passion, Identity, Charisma, Romance, Intimacy, Empathy, Theatre, Obsession, Relationship Dynamics

THE NEEDS OF THE MANY

MIND: Objectivity, Logic, Multiple Perspectives, Clarity, Research, Utility, Allocation, Systems, Puzzles, Strategy, Prediction, Decisions, Outcomes, Chess, Guiding Laws

Regardless of whether there is any actual interplay between the literal right or left brain, the Heart and Mind aspects create an

intuitive dichotomy between obtrusive emotion and elegant ascendance - and indeed, the emotions the Heart aspect fixates on are *always* obtrusive. Heart mythologizes the wildest, loudest, and hottest passions into a representation of someone's pure soul, where self-sabotage proves it's genuine and contradiction proves complexity. It is a fixation on identity, along with which identities compliment each other and how; while it's not always romantic (even though it usually is) or implying that they're all flirts (even though they usually are), nobody romanticizes romance like a Heartbound - and rarely anything subtle compared to the wild, destructive obsessions of "I'd choose you even if the world burns". Even alone, the Heartbound are distinctive in how their sense of identity is never tidy, with the explorations on their "deep soul" looping in on itself. There's an intrinsic fascination with inventing new masks and affects and roles, often as much for charismatic improv as the contemplations that these constructs all reflect parts of themselves - noble, true, antagonistic, buried, etc. One of the more curious habits is treating these personas as capable of a dialogue and thoughts of their own, which is not to say being Heartbound is synonymous with DID, only that they are very susceptible to becoming lost in their own reflection. Stemming from this, many Heartbounds will pride themselves on empathic intuition, but it's a coinflip if any of that lands - really, wrong guesses call into question if the Heartbounds are even investigating *anyone's* psyche or just making shit up. Ultimately, "The heart wants what it wants" and "I must be true to myself" are the only justifications given, the only justifications needed, all from individuals bound to a dogma that is - and let's call a spade a spade here - anti-logic.

Don't ever forget that Heart is between Rage and Time; just because they get all gooeey over romance doesn't mean they're pushovers. Things can - and will - get raw. As a controversial TV show once said, "Love is a psychopath".

The Mind aspect, meanwhile, wants none of this: emotions are to be outmaneuvered, appeased, waited out, or flat out ignored, all in the name of pursuing a fair (though not always *happy*) system of justice. Mind is a notch away from Space, and shares priorities with patience, detachment, and collectivism. Among this overlap, and more important than a subtle affinity for low temperatures ("cooler heads prevail" and what have you), is the fixation on choice; rather than our ability to choose, it is the outcome of those choices. The most poetic picture the Mind aspect can provide is that the world is a grand procession of cause/effect, and all our decisions should be weighed carefully if we want to come out better for it. Course, only the truly zealous classes will preach that, leaving Mind with the least identifiable aesthetic of any aspect - "smart?" and "math?" is not enough to go on. For the most part, if you want to identify a Mindbound, then you gotta look for someone trying to stuff down

anything Heart-adjacent. Now sure, very few people have straightforward love lives, but it's the Mindbound who would prefer it all so clinical, trying to cleanly navigate what can't. Assuming they don't weigh their career or other goals above relationships entirely, then the ones they have are chosen tactically, trying to engineer the most collective good, or guiltily regarded as failing that. (Hopefully) unrelated to this, Mind even shares some of Heart's mask-making, but more for the pragmatism of tangible results in different social contexts...and if emotions need to be forced, or outright invented, it is Mind's ideology that can best justify those acts. This isn't to say they're sociopaths (even if they might want to be) or philistines (which is more a Time thing), but the philosophical clarity the Mindbound chase requires that all the messy stuff is ~~repressed~~ regulated.

Paints such a picture of drama, don't it? Look, I'll write what I can and point to Latula and Terezi, even though those are fictional characters created to exemplify more explosive, high stakes interpretations of these qualities. But I have to. I'm not gonna touch the *real* drama I know from the Mindbounds in my life. Not without plausible deniability and equivalencies.

And another thing: Time and Mind have an odd overlap when it comes to ideas of "practicality". If you hear a few talking points people go over, you might confuse the two, but one would cut the Gordian Knot even if it knew how to untangle it. Remember, these two aspects are *nearly* on other sides of the compass, and Space has just as many arguments with Heart: what's truly wagered here is instincts vs. patience. At its most dignified, Time's lucidity is still built on "what you see is what you get" immediacy, its efficiency damaged by short-term extreme measures, and its logic too hungry to rush to conclusions. Mind can be ruthless, competitive, but rarely ever reductive; Time likes its little boxes. its quick insults, and those instincts will drive - or pervert - any actual calculations at play.

...I mean, you *have* picked up on my own writing style, right?

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CLAP YOUR HANDS IF YOU BELIEVE

HOPE: Fantasy, Utopia, Exceptions, Innocence, Heroism, Reinvention, Perfection, Impossibility, Suspension of Disbelief, Sugarcoating, Silver Linings, Denial, Lying

CUT THE BULLSHIT

RAGE: Truth, Harsh Reality, Rigid Structure, Disillusionment, Sobriety, Sanity, Memory, Limitation, Routine, Pragmatism, Doubt, Bitterness, Futility, Tantrums

The Hope aspect veers further from Space than Mind did, where "Ideal risks" sharpen into "million-to-one shots that fix everything"; it's a pretty distinctive niche of the human psyche and our myths, already dissected and discussed, and all we're clarifying are those with their self-identity tied to it. The Hopebound possess an ever-present lurch of optimistic imagination - that friends (or strangers) can be trusted and everything will come up aces eventually, no matter

the odds (or precedent) of that not coming to pass. There's just this deep-rooted indignity to it all, either feeling their circumstances are worth exemption from rules, or that said rules are loose enough they shouldn't be enforced, or that the rules are plain *wrong* and deserve rewriting. There is a charisma to their wild ideas, but not often *strategy*, and limits to their ability to sell these ideas to themselves as much as others. Hope is an unwieldy aspect, with those on a winning streak still worried of how long they can keep it up (or pretend to be keeping it up), and those in dire straits incapable of practical solutions; the deeper the pit, the higher they're convinced they'll need to jump. It's not (all) delusion: it's defiance, most days, from someone personally insulted at the cards they were dealt, retaliating by either throwing it back in the dealer's face or betting the damn farm. Hope is an aspect of never-say-die saviors, bold innovations that cut through what was once set in stone, sincere faith in a future that cannot come about *without* faith...or the aspect of broken promises and blind denial, blowing their money on scratch tickets while they try to aggressively pretend everything's fine - sometimes, fairly convincingly. No matter the intent, the Hope aspect is very dangerous in its ability to appear as anything but.

In Homestuck's exposition, Hope is labelled the "most powerful aspect". It's a loaded term. I get it, okay, but 'power' isn't the most important variable to keep track of, and a lot of people miss that. A lot more people don't seem to realize they have the authority to disagree with that assertion.

Personally? Maybe it's my experiences, or the ol' Demiurge analogues of Time, but the Hopebound rub me wrong the most. Sure, Spacebounds are diametrically opposed, but the nature of the axis is that you can at least force a conversation from it; we're at least speaking the same language, even if the goalposts are swapped. Hopebounds have a bad habit of only listening to what they want out of you, summarizing your speeches in a way that suits them...which might explain why the Ragebounds speak the way they do.

Moving in a moodier direction than Heart, Rage gets its eponymous name from centering on the most obtrusive emotion of all, and all worldly obtrusions that (should) evoke it. More than contrast, Rage is almost some kind of natural predator to Hope, with a fetishization of disappointment and wake-up-calls. This bitterness is not exactly *compassionate*, but is seen as a justice: hatred is honest, memory defines us, failure teaches us, apologies are worthless, and the world's cruelties exist for a reason...right? Rage is, despite itself, a dogma, adhering to the belief that the truth hurts, what hurts is probably true, and it is noble to exemplify both those things. Now, they're not (inherently) bullies or anything, and more timid classes will only demonstrate this situationally against carefully decided targets, but Ragebounds tend to believe that insulting someone's hairstyle or choice of music is equally important as any actual point they're making - humility through humiliation, so to say. Still, this destructive streak can fester into a contempt for any happiness besides schadenfraude, zealously eager to break apart someone's "lesser"

comprehension of reality...which leads into how precarious it is to worship an idea of truth that supplants genuine observation. Ragebounds are prone to mistrust facts and testimony unless it is satisfyingly (or conveniently) caustic, making them arrogantly skeptical on nothing but their gut, while thinking being *smug* is, itself, an argument. If this gets out of hand, the pursuit of "truthier truths" dismisses anything outside its manufactured mythology, making the Ragebound increasingly conspiratorial in their sole sobriety. While both aspects can motivate and shake foundations, having your head in the clouds or feet on the ground work better as methodology - not the point.

To say "Truth" is synonymous with Rage is still an oversimplification. "Truth" can be a lot of things, and the foundation of those iterations often comes from Light, Time, Mind, and even Void as much as Rage - a truth that guides, that burns, that can be calculated, that remains incomprehensible to mortal minds, all just as "truth-y" as the one that demands it's hard to swallow. Rage and Time come the closest in agreeing, certainly both fostering a sentiment of "The real world sucks, deal with it"; yet, that single sentiment does not an aspect make, only just a convergent evolution of it all. Time has too much adrenaline, too much ambition, and too much wanting to kill everyone who mildly disagrees with you - most of its philosophy stems from the empty gnawing of being unable to do that. "Don't get mad, get even" says the Time aspect...but Rage is every ideal and pride *in* getting mad, no matter how little it accomplishes. It's not supposed to, really; "tangible results" was never a part of its truth. Just important to realize that *every* truth is cultivated.

Still, while that might be the root, the aesthetic and personality certainly have a different splendor too - no fire and lightning clockwork for Mx. Grumpypants, oh no! Rage will always be the little nagging voice, reminding anyone around that any fantasy is just fleeting dreams, pixels, ink, or stage props. Perhaps its most distinguishing features is all the simulation theory hullabaloo, or the Dionysian obsession with madness and drink - eventually, one way or another, it always comes back to clowns.

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EVERYTHING HAPPENS FOR A REASON

LIGHT: Symbology, Answers, Fortune, Luck, Destiny, Storytelling, Conclusions, Association, Assumption, Fate, Coherency, Holistics, Payoff, Hints, Canon, Cliches,

?

VOID: , Maybe, I dunno, Whim, Flippancy, Confusion, Guesswork, Rumours, Myth, Nonsense, Silence, Mystery, Secrets, Surprises, Irrelevancy, Fanon, Pumpkins

The Light aspect presents itself as a seeker of great truths, unifying and guiding those that find it - and while that's not technically wrong, it's important to realize that anything one notch off from Time is looking for catharsis before anything else. Light expands where Time reduces, turning blunt judgements into resplendent archetypes, all in the name of clean and compelling narratives. While the Lightbound (probably) do not literally believe their world a fiction, they are often eccentric in arranging it as though it was one; stories, titles, myths,

popularity contests, tropes and cliches, all treated as tangible enough to trust and work off of. Even if they (consciously) put this aside, there's still an innate superstition that colours their worldview: what they *expect* to happen is what *ought* to happen (do not bring Lightbounds to casinos). If life is a puzzle, the Lightbound are way, way, way too quick to assume they found all the corner pieces; that any and all unknowns uncovered may still be fit to existing, verified categorizations, and that the most annoying thing people can do is not stick to their scripts. Even in the face of doubt, Light's complexity compounds, rationalizing curveballs away with a lust for answers that only answers itself. The aspect that pertains to relevant information ironically obscures the most relevant fact of all: stories are *comforting* more often than they are *true*. The ability to connect dots does not mean the dots *should* be connected, leaving the Lightbound chasing a "grand destiny" they don't realize they're inventing. "Luck" may be the more accurate name, but Lightbound find it difficult to admit their worldview hinges on coincidence; to keep the golden flame of fervor going, you're going to need to burn a lot of books.

Lightbounds seem to fight me the least on buying into this whole personality system (the most is Ragebounds). Still, sorting through the actual truth and what they just associate about themselves, or feel like guessing on...well, don't let what I wrote make you think I take it personally. I will say this though: gender roles and propaganda can be some of those "superstitious myths" they take a little too personally...

The Void aspect is Space's somehow-more-depressing sibling, finding value in exactly the kind of unsatisfying lack of payoff Light abhors. It revels in uncommitted ambiguity, contemplating what surprises lie outside our perception, and how meager our preconceptions are in the face of such hypotheticals. "Doubt" is the most intrinsic quality of the Voidbound, and probably the reason it's hard to name any others; if life is a puzzle, then the Voidbound don't believe in corner pieces, or even the picture on the box. It is a bit of a coinflip, however, if they think "the truth is out there" waiting to be discovered by those wise enough to never trust anything for certain...or if existence truly is nothing more than cheerful nonsense, only ruined if you try to force it into order. The more you look for answers, the more you could wind up wasting your time, or find something you can't unsee. Then again, some Voidbounds can spend so much time *imagining* what's out there that they'll argue based on wild hunches they either can't or won't clarify - sometimes, without *admitting* they're hunches. Confusion can be a valuable state of mind, embraced or encouraged, spiritually or tactically. Still, while the Lightbound are dangerously overcertain of all-they-can-be, the Voidbound...well, "lack". Whatever class they are is composed of values they - by definition - cannot articulate, where self-reflection challenges self-confidence. Hunches and flights of fancy are their preferred state of being for the reason of their lack of

reason, where being truly *known* can feel equal parts impossible and precarious. The Lightbound rarely see their true potential, but where the Voidbound often do, they simply do not recognize it as such.

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EVERYBODY DO THEIR PART

LIFE: Solutions, Health, Politeness, Social Obligations, Support, Stability, Harmony, Growth, Appearances, Teamwork, Nature, Nurture, Food, Safety, Complacency

I DON'T OWE YOU A SMILE

DOOM: Problems, Sickness, Spiraling, Dysfunction, Isolation, Fatalism, Depression, Coping, Crying, Venting, Rot, Decay, Rest, Reprieve, Resignation, Closure

The Life aspect shares some of the archetype obligation from Light, but tempers it with an essential idealism: the only story being told is “and everyone lived happily ever after”. The Lifebound strive for health, sustainability, emotional wellness, cheerful communities, and fetishizes the smallest steps to get there. Life is tied for Hope in terms of positivity, but leaning to Time instead of Space is what defines its language of practical, tangible solutions, and the vigilance in keeping your hands busy. On a surface level, it seems like there’s no downsides, but the keyword is surface. The Life aspect still shares weaknesses with Light, misunderstanding impression and substance: trying to make people *look* healthy feels as valid as *being* healthy, all while far easier to engineer. Even this reliable practicality is a double edged sword, as the Life aspect never runs out of ways to slot itself into the lives of others, and self-perpetuates by trying to kill the voice that protests - “burnout” is in the realm of the Doom aspect, the *enemy*. Whatever class a person may have, the Life aspect will dominate the definition of that self-identity into “unpaid therapist”, inflicting a burden to carry their entire lives. Every Lifebound is, effectively, springlocked into smiling for (their projected perception of) everyone else’s benefit, and they will ***always*** snap eventually. In the end, Life can be as fragile as Hope, but the damage to their sense of self is not (inherently) from incredulity as much as fatigue, disgusted at the high cost of upkeep they can rarely admit is coming *entirely* from their own head; even if their friends want help, the details of how much and in what way are often lost in translation through the deeply-worn conniptions. Again, “unpaid therapist”, but not always qualified to be a paid one either. No matter their best, it is the fetishization of stability that ultimately destines it for instability.

Even if it's happened before, you'd be surprised how many learn the wrong lessons and just wind up breaking apart again. So much ugly. So much *unworkable* ugly.

"Destined instability", however, has a name: Doom. It is the aspect of pessimism, decay, languishing, and probably just the emo/goth scene as a whole. While occasionally fascinated by death and our futility towards it, it is not the adrenaline-filled conflicts of Time, but rather, a perspective on loss, grief, and the contented numbing that comes with processing all of that. Indeed, "contented numbing" overlaps with the directly-adjacent Void, even if Doom has no innate interest in secrets and strays even further from Space's lack of bias; in all the intangibles of what could be, expect only disappointment, as all good things come to an end and leave you lesser. The Doombound themselves, however, are all *quite* accustomed to this state of mind, and fairly in tune with the positives that come from not having a goddamn thing to prove to anyone. If it all rots *eventually*, then bothering to hold on to relationships, morals, or dignity can feel insulting, especially if it's societal and not anything personally chosen. While it isn't unfair to regard this as an eternal personal raincloud of "unproductive bellyaching", the Doombound can be both greatly approachable or emotionally suffocating - sometimes both. Genuine compassion shines all the more in contrast, from someone with no expectations of others as much as themself...though, sympathy alone is not enough for everyone. Even to the Doombound themselves, there's cracks from what they only *thought* they could tolerate or give up on, worn down by an aspect that may as well be surgically designed to justify self-sabotage and willful isolation. Between Stepford Smiles or eye rolls, arguments of happiness's surplus or scarcity only reach the same result: failure by futility, or failure by design.

It seems much more culturally accepted that someone's "healing process" might involve staying at home for awhile, away from everyone, eating a bucket of ice cream and listening to country music. Still, the perception that Doom is *only* an aspect to be indulged in small bursts before you get back in the saddle reflects on Life's goalposts. Sometimes you don't want to get back in the saddle; you're sick of that fucking horse and you just want to lie down at the side of the road and starve to death. Fuck the horse. Fuck people. Fuck everyone including yourself. It's the sort of sentiment that makes talking to Doombounds difficult - I mean, sure, don't help a friend who doesn't want help, but if they're psychologically predisposed to prefer being depressed?...It can get murky. I mean, I owe it the same argument I give Time, in that it's a valid path of ideology by virtue of existing at all. I don't abide totality, but even that's just my personal take, and I'm just *really* not sure sometimes what ideal moderation looks like...

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DON'T WORRY, BE HAPPY

BREATH: The Future, "The Easy Way", Trust in Intuition, Freedom, The Wind, Trailblazing, Individuality, Moving Forward, Freeflow, Calm, Forgive, Forget, Boredom

DON'T YOU DARE WALK AWAY

BLOOD: The Past, "The Hard Way", Trust in Others, Bonds, Oaths, Promises, Grudges, Family, Judgement, Suffering, Comraderie, Ordeals, Stress, Sacrifice, Debt, Scars, Guilt,

The second axis of aspects really couldn't care less if the mind is looking internal or external, resulting in two aspects equally as likely to find unifying threads between all aspects as ignore the "big picture" stuff altogether, while their lack of internal interrogation makes them reliable in how they trust others and themselves at face value. The Breath aspect is the absolute peak of positivity, transcending the limitations of both Hope and Life by assuring with complete sincerity that "Everything is going to be okay, eventually". The specific details and structure of the future, be it imagined or observed, are rendered irrelevant as Breath positions it's *full* faith in this stress-free peace of mind, as contagious as it is indefatigable. Pain is temporary, promises were made in an old world that doesn't exist anymore, leave behind what (or who) isn't working for you, and you'll find your path someday, somehow. If Breath falters, it doesn't need an argument to reassert itself; only the *vibe* must return, feeling like this obvious constant you didn't really lose so much as forgot you always had. The Breathbound are steadfast, accommodating, and resilient enough to make excellent figureheads...but, it is that *vague* sense of the future that betrays a lack of endgame, and the humble wisdom that bypasses so many existential concerns can be a buffer against not actually having a real answer. Believing in tomorrow is charismatic, but not prediction, all while the assurances easily turn incestuous: resolved of the need to justify itself, or assert itself at all. Finding simple solutions can mean little besides the path of least resistance, where it doesn't matter if you're bored or depressed, only that you're relaxed. Breath is blissful, independent freedom - and sometimes, even often, not a damn thing else.

There is some overlap with Void, but, just in a convergent evolution of it all. They come from different places, with different languages, to reach that easy-going intuition in what's not quite there.

The Blood aspect shares many of Breath's strengths and weaknesses, in its lack of bias to tangible and intangible, giving it unique solutions and a certain rallying charisma. It is, however, still diametrically opposed, worshipping the past and all the pain that comes from holding on tight to what was, using that endurance of suffering to create bonds to last through thick and thin - family, born or forged. While "community and cooperation" may feel redundant to Life (blame the human genome), Blood has *zero* interest in being polite about its assurances, and mistrusts innovation compared to what works...or, doesn't work. We suffer, and we suffer together; Blood is the aspect of

martyrs, of donating kidneys to relatives you don't even talk to anymore, and trying to endure a friend's terrible choice of movie night. It does all of this while being too responsible to resemble Doom's lackadaisiness, or overthink the reliability of memory like Rage's obsessions. Like Breath's good moods, Blood's bad moods don't need to be argued, but it is the *loyalty* through that grim affect that can make Bloodbonds as magnetic as their inverse. If the Bloodbond has a reason to be grumpy, it's because they're sick of everyone's shit, but also care about them deeply - though, this doesn't mean they'll always be *justified* in lashing out, either from an unrequited intensity, or a particularly petty definition of "everyone's shit". Just as with Breath's vaguery, Blood can flounder on goals besides the purity of itself, as the burden of suffering loops into a sunk cost fallacy that's a hard sell to the very people the Bloodbond requires to identify themselves. Likewise, this idea of "thick and thin" can result in pardoning - or *encouraging* - abuse, be it their own or others. Breath and Blood both create some powerfully single-minded people, unifying groups under banners whether it's theirs or not...but if they don't want to lose them, they have to *listen*, not just talk.

In the broken feed of misinformation the Homestuck community works off of and propagates, it was still clear that Breath and Blood were the aspects of 'leadership'. Everyone was fairly agreed on this, but what annoyed me was no one would say *why*. "Just because they are"? If it's all fiction, fine, but even to those that did think there was more to it, I couldn't find anyone with a real case. Why, precisely, do these two ideological concepts IN PARTICULAR double any class's potential to play autocrat? Why do people of so many stripes WANT to follow them?

Well, I've met more than a few on either end, and this is my take, if nothing else.

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I've often mused on this (and responded to the understandable skepticism that I'm making a big deal out of nothing) - people sometimes wobble on the aspects clockwise and counter-clockwise, and it's not impossible to see a gradient. Is there truly such a clean split when it comes to people, or at least measured in percentages? It feels right to assume people are messier than 12 defaults, but I've still not seen anyone actually truly pivot to a new primary OR class; that's with a lot of investigating of people young and old, often asking family about certain people in my life. You can trace the same steps, and hear the same clichés, even 40 years ago. People follow blueprints, and if there's any way out, I'd honestly consider it preferable - as is, we play the cards we're dealt.

ATTUNE/ADAPT (WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO PROVE?)

Classes don't exist in a vacuum, where there's a gradient in how they deal with "what is right" (AKA their aspect). "Attuning" tries to cohere and define the default of the belief, where "Adapt" refers to the rearrangement - or outright defiance - of these conventions. While "principle" and "pragmatism" may also get the point across, it doesn't always go that way, as an attuned aspect can feel like practical fact, and an adapted aspect can feel righteous and cosmic. It's also worth

noting that adapted aspects often feel more fragile and disruptive, but this is often a matter of perception; there's value and danger to any combination of classes and aspects, and attuned ones can be just as precarious while feeling very innegotiable to the individual holding them. The horseshoe bent of intensity will affect the volume of these ideologies, but anyone can find something they'd die for; what varies most is the certainty that the current situation qualifies.

Regardless, every class can more or less be translated as "someone who [verbs] their aspect". It sounds simplistic, but, at a person's core, it's usually the guiding principle behind a huge swath of their personality and actions. From these perspectives, "goodness" is inherently:

Easy - Intuitive - Merit - Static | Variable - Tricky - Subjective - Effort

Which correlates into the class pairs:

Masters - Fae - Servants - Prophets | Magicians - Outlaws - Royals - ???

The associated verbs (more or less) correspond as such:

Command - Create - Exploit - Know | Change - Steal - Destroy - Conquer

Or, in other words to get the point across...

Assume - Grow - Weaponize - Study | Nudge - Fix - Censor - Rewrite

...Or to be *harsh*...

Hoard - Propagate - Hijack - Condone | Tamper - Cheat - Violate - Corrupt

With all that in mind, it's time to get to the juicy parts...

...in, just a second. One more thing.

AN APOLOGY IN ADVANCE (SURGERY WITH RUSTY TOOLS)

I need to be clear that this is going to sting. Beyond a certain levity and teasing, there will be hurtful accusations made of both crimes in the past, or the potential future, and I will mark these as symptoms of immutable conditions that we cannot and

should not downplay, let alone deny. I will not pretend that there are not more diplomatic alternatives to describing classes, and that my own fixation on confrontation has not influenced my faith in my method - I have my own delusions, after all.

I can say that, no matter what thrills I get in hurting people, I can (and want to) give it a point; bad habits, chronic cycles of disfunction, methods of abuse, the languages of self loathing, all of these sore spots are worth hitting by virtue of being unique. If I say "this class is heroic and looks out for their friends", then specifications become increasingly blurry by our own aspirations - *everyone* wants to be heroic and look out for their friends. There's a lot of potential here to focus on who we could be, and to make that exciting, but it's too easily lost, squandered, and cheapened if we lead with dopamine and celebration. I don't want you to say "Oh, this class looks cool, I wonder if I'm one!" - I want you to say "I'm in this picture and I don't like it" before I get to any compliments. It's unpleasant, but it heightens self-consciousness in the unsure, and weeds out the romantics who would otherwise fuck with my flowcharts.

Even with that in mind, I cannot promise parity; the third paragraph will always be the hardest hitting (even a few of the first ones won't be flattering), but acknowledging a full sum of damage to oneself and those around us still won't be even for everyone. Some classes are higher risk than others, and acknowledging that is important to mitigate that risk (to say nothing of WARNING other people of specific toxicity and excuses). To come to terms with our class, to come to terms with *ourselves*, we cannot use rose-tinted glasses, or pretend the crimes of the past didn't matter or won't happen again. The ugly side of us is the most distinct, the toughest to survive and the trickiest to sanitize - you fight that, you fight your best qualities alongside it. You want someone else's best qualities? Sheesh, go nuts, imitate and be the person you know you're not - but you have to know you're not. I'll have a whole section on discrepancies later, if anyone's still fiesty.

I think I've made my point that if we just want a classpect to "make us sound cool and be fun", we miss the bigger point. We're talking about entire human lives here - the good, the bad, the questions we'll be asking ourselves for decades and in our darkest moments. I'm trying to articulate the question for people who misinterpret it, while mentioning what answers are likely to work and which aren't. It's up to the individual to choose what answer works for them, and some classes have more choice and leeway than others - it's not fair, but it's true. Classes are an anatomy of our wants, fears, and preconceptions; it's hard explaining that it's static for us, and not universal for the people around us. The best way I have to prove that it even *exists* is to hit you in every sore spot, cut every artery, pinch every nerve, all while pointing to the chart. The same things that bother us will not bother other people, and however uncomfortable that makes you feel is one more hint to what your class is.

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PROPHETS

(SCHOLARS, INVESTIGATORS, BYSTANDERS)

The first step of attunement is the last step of grief: acceptance. That the aspect, the world, simply is; blameless and beautiful, good and bad both. There are obvious limitations, but it in those limitations that one can take comfort in, with a perspective on the whole that need not accomodate one voice within it. It is a quiet faith, and when wielded correctly, it permits a field of answers as accurate as they are unpleasant, immutable but highlighting other opportunities. Emboldened, and you've got someone who **knows** more than they should.

MAGES (OR MAGI) are know-it-all's who never feel the need to prove it, and position themselves in situations where they never have to. Comfortable with isolation, disinterested in praise, awkward at basic

social interaction, Mages are often less your friend and more just “around”. While capable of great trust and devotion, passing this threshold usually happens with zero fanfare, and doesn’t change the day to day much either. Most comfortable in personal duties and passion projects, it’s often a continued effort from friends to keep them involved; even then, it’s a Mage staple to suddenly and abruptly leave conversations without a proper goodbye. They’re used to their advice going unheeded, and aware (usually) that their insights are purely personal anyways, but Mages themselves are often blind to the greater ripples of their convictions; be it genuine assistance to others they didn’t intend, or cracks in their logic and the consequences thereof. It is a complicated dance to keep them socially involved without becoming too frustrated at their weird priorities and scheduling, but that confusion tends to go both ways. Mages have their routine - in their career, their hobbies, and even their emotions - and they’ll happily do that for the rest of their life if nothing stops them. Solving people’s problems is a compromise, birthed from either confusion or annoyance (there is certainly a difference between shy and confident Mages) that anyone has those problems to begin with. Somewhere, there is the subtle hope that their knowledge and way of life will inspire to some degree, easing the everpresent strain of indecision and worry...but they sure as shit won’t slow down for you to catch up.

Mulder. I’m talking about Mulder from the X-files. I guess Captain Holt from Brooklyn 99 too. The more people come to grips with that precise kind of weirdo, the better. I know quite a few depictions of atypicals meet the bill, but...well, I’m a living counterpoint, as are many aspies I’ve aggressively psychoanalyzed. Still, Pages and Mages are awfully close...there might be some commonality, as the isolation and difficulty connecting that comes with that condition tends to lead to Mages. After all, it’s hard to attend others when your own place in the world is so consistantly tumultuous and a 24/7 problem. Maybe. This is guesswork on my end from the limited evidence, but I at least know Mages who aren’t autistic and people who are autistic who aren’t Mages, and that’s enough to kill some stereotypes.

Mages **know** their aspect - appreciate, understand, observe, *that’s it*, and purely personally too. They’re attuned to the bare minimum, appreciating the greater whole without needing to save the world, their friends, or even themselves. If it goes wrong and screws them over, if it limits them in any way, they don’t miss a beat; even if they’re proven egregiously incorrect and everything they’ve fought for and believed in was a lie, they’ll probably bounce back in a week tops (and not always with the lesson you’d *expect* they learn from it). They walk this path of virtue and dignity alone, because they can and no one seems to agree with them (as readily as they’d like) anyways. These beliefs embolden them on their career, hobbies, or other pursuits, which they pursue unerringly. They want little, and what they do want is tied up in their beliefs; the fact that their guiding principles may lean selfish is often a recognized occupational hazard,

which they cannot* change and do not want to. Even when it lacks flair or high stakes, their read of their aspect is still something fulfilling and engrossing; it's their simple truths, their inescapable fate, their private passions, their singular instructions to life, the car they expect to break down every now and again, and their parent who won't let them out to play. It just is.

They definately learned that early: "This is life, and there's no changing that." A collection of childhood experiences to numb you to things going wrong...hell, even Sollux as a Mage of Doom can't even die correctly or have an apocalypse he was ready for, can he?

Also, this neutrality often extends to politics: Mages either refuse to get involved, or personally represent the Overton Window. It's not their best quality, I'll admit, but it's more proof they really are people who always try to find truth in the middle of extremes. I'm mentioning this here more out of *hoping* it's not a default.

Whatever problems a Mage faces, their favourite solution is the same thing that too often causes them: isolation, from the world and all the people in it. Whatever ambitions a Mage has, none of them include statues or songs in their honor, compared to being a perceptive and savvy lone operator - a simple soul speaking simple truths, "tsk tsk"ing away the sympathetic fools who do not share their wisdom. Humble, unambitious, reasonable, polite...but only to their definition of it. Tier 1 is an extreme as much as Tier 4, only so much more conservative in scope; Mages are quite possibly the most stubbornly single-minded force of nature the human psyche can muster, and often fail to see the problem in that. Their lack of interest in others affairs blurs into a lack of responsibility, standing by while friends suffer from not knowing the solution innately, or not knowing a reason that suits them. Even if they are persuaded, Mages can be unapologetically slapdash with fixes from impatience and inflexibility. The real problems are when Mages start getting uppity and throw their weight around. Everything they want to do feels right to them, every justification feels consistent to their self-image, everyone else seems increasingly lost without their guidance; the impulse to *become* intelligent twist to an impression they are by default. It can be annoying getting a lecture from someone who assumes they know more than you like it's divine right; it can be *dangerous* having someone lie to you without even consciously recognizing they're doing so, or what they stand to gain. Again, not a "money and power" type, but pride can be quieter than that single definition, leaving ignoble desires mislabeled by someone who only needs to (or *can*) convince themselves that they're above such things. Mages are more than their monotonic self image, but both potential and malice can be swept away as long as "convenient" feels comfortable. They're a cult of one - and not above crusades.

With all worst case scenarios I go over, it's important to stipulate that the degree will always vary with the person and the choices they make. Teenage tantrums, exasperated by

abuse or addictive vices, jokes gone too far that may have never been jokes at all, or all idle fantasies from someone who *knows* they *could*.

I've got Mage friends. I've made sure at least one of them read what I wrote above, and certainly me and my friends have spoken up if he's explaining something we already know (and/or incorrectly). I feel it pertinent to call him out on those things, to know I can at all. I knew a friend for about 12 years, and despite some ups and downs, he was one of my closest pals. I considered him family, and he gave me some encouraging words of advice putting this together - a Prospit Mage of Light he was. Still...he's not around anymore. I still consider him family somewhere, but I can't forget who he's hurt.

Prospit Mages live in a state of perpetual contentment. They have a clear interpretation of how to be a good person, and are fairly confident it won't be much trouble - or crowded. Their "perfect approach to life" might sound naive, but the fact that it works for them (and them alone) is the only proof they need...so who are you to attack their happiness? Sure, they're agreeable and not likely to take offense to much, but squaring up for direct conflict ends poorly; whatever the dynamic was before, it can very easily turn into "I'm right, and if you don't see that, I'm leaving". Here's a hint: it's not a bluff. They might be wrong, but it's *never* a bluff. Whether awkwardly timid or professionally self-righteous, Prospit Mages will face all the ups and downs of being a human being on their terms alone, and trying to sway any of that - *regardless* of one's intention - is a Herculean labor. If opportunities or relationships fall apart, they'll shrug it off and say they did all they could; if they do beat themselves up over their actions, forgiveness is irrelevant, as is suggesting they might be off on *which* action needs critique. Buried at variable depths, they've all got an oddball sense of humor that not everyone will "get", emblematic of their overall willful independence. In every facet of every layer of persona and principle, all is affixed with one single line: "Take it or leave it".

You meet one, and it's like, you never met anyone like this before. They're weird and static and it's like pulling teeth hanging out with them if they've got more important things to do...and then, you meet another. And then you get recommended Snufkin clips on Youtube. And you realize, people like this just, exist.

Originally, I thought Sollux's more standoffish traits were his Derse side, and even more recently I thought timid Mages were only a Derse thing. I hope Hussie knew, at least.

Derse Mages live in a state of perpetual confusion. The Derse edge cracks all the calm certainties of Magehood, but does not provide alternatives, resulting in a breed of Mage that can never quite find the balance of snarky, supportive, and stoic they're aiming for...but predictably, still not one that wants any (or at least much) help with that. Derse Mages are much more negotiable to their social circle and obligations, with Magely conniptions less gospel and more guidelines. Often their most stubborn convictions are decided on after a few (possibly *one*) genuine attempts at alternatives, tempered by a transparent admission of whatever doubts lead to it and may be lingering. This inner mechanism spills into their people skills, as while

Derse Mages are, again, more negotiable to be helpful at all compared to Prospits, they're often very ham-fisted when doing so; frictions in personality, reckless miscommunication, assumption superseding curiosity, and a tendency to acknowledge all of these things before shrugging and doing it again 5 minutes later. Mages are, after all, Prophets, which is not any bonafide psychic power to be clear, but a self-identity built on intuition - *not* investigation. Prospit Mages are personally resolute and worldly complacent based on this (DEBATABLEY QUALIFIED) certainty of who they are, what they know, and what they're capable of...but, to have *all* of that be perpetually off-balance makes Derse Mages feel like they've got something to prove, without even being completely sure who they're trying to prove it too.

The worldbuilding, interpersonal lore and, most importantly (to me), characterization of the second batch of Trolls in Homestuck is weighed down by how transparently they remain Hussie spitefully looking down on internet stereotypes and misinterpretations of their own (deliberately obfuscated) system. With the asterisk firmly established, I have had some reconsiderations on good old Meulin, whose catgirl-meme-material still surrounds a *functional* blueprint of a Mage of Heart; perhaps someday I'll meet one proper, and see how much of a trainwreck it truly is to be the class that most firmly controls their emotions paired with the aspect of wildly expressing emotion without restriction.

Still, it is her trail of destruction playing matchmaker that makes the best thread to follow, in what pushed her to do it in the first place. Not too hard to tie it next to all (or, half) of Sollux's team player behavior, or even Friendsim's Diemen...and, a helluva' lot easier knowing a Derse Mage of Life personally. I consulted him alot to make sure none of what I wrote here is either inaccurate or in poor taste. He said it was fine. Granted, he's a Lifebound, and I've made my point about them being "fine", but, I'll burn that bridge when I come to it. Certainly, at least, I hope I don't have to. He's a great friend.

A last note, while I think all classes have an *affect* you can learn to recognize, Derse Mages have one of the most unique speaking styles. Rigid, tense, proffessional, glossing over open self-deprecation and all the ways they know they're a nerd. It seems so specific, but they all grow into it independently, and I haven't known any to grow out.

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Stoic. No further words needed, no embellishment or exaggeration except to play conciliatory to those confused. The deeper nature of this world provides law and language, distilled from the essence of whispers and wisps; you put your trust in elemental energy, permit it, and in return are made enigmatic. Science made of magic most call madness, documenting all findings in a study with no conclusion besides the process itself. Pariah to politics, the squabbles men make fighting over the shells and scrap secondary always to the greater game afoot - irrelevant, distracted, they shout and you murmur, perpendicular, askew. The Mage in their tower, still stoic, static, stressed at requests of the inept. Expect fact to meet fiction in parity, perish the naivete, stand back while the spellcaster saves only lives recognized in the lines of prophecy. If a mob marches to meet you, accept your fate as you accepted theirs, ascendance through acquiescence - deny all the arrogance. Mortality is messy, mired in maybes and ambiguity, but a glimpse of cosmic clarity can confuse

you're only capable of compromise - or corruption, if you forget which side you're looking in from. Madness made magic and back again, lens cut your eye and bled over the garden, wizard gone wild with the wrong revelation. Between good and evil isn't purity, just mediocrity - not justice, it just is, nothing noble in neutrality. Math is only method, perspective is not purpose; your tome is a poor bible, better fit as focus. Observe, and the arcane will give you paths - wield, and you will cut them yourself.

Never get complacent.

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SEERS are fascinating people by virtue of how much they resemble the trope of movie characters designed entirely to dump exposition: content to observe the stories of others, present in every conversation with a perspective from the outside, and verbose despite a seemingly non-existent (or at least *stable*) ego. Every Seer is ready to give advice to others on how to solve their problems and live virtuously - if they don't, or it's not appreciated, they are surprisingly patient in debates-bordering-on-arguments to get there. They rarely stray from the backline of groups, where even when tragedy meets them and theirs, Seers spend less time on damage control compared to bemoaning themselves for not seeing it coming. Despite this presumed importance of duty, Seers compensate professionalism with a notch of playfulness, making them more approachable and keeping them in the loop if they're still processing their thoughts (and because screwing with people is funny). They have a penchant for hanging around erratic or unstable people, keeping them on the right path as readily as they tell everyone else how to co-exist with them. It's a comfortable niche, and fulfills their call to action, but the brass tacks is that anyone that chronically problematic needs more help than a holding pattern of advice and lectures. If someone is intent to drive their life off a cliff (or into a crowd of people), Seers are prone to sit there in the passenger seat as the familiar voice that says "I told you so". Even self-preservation usually manifests as leaving without a word, when previous arguments gave too much slack in the hope someone's mind would change. Seers do not want to force anyone's hand, or draw unneeded attention to themselves, and any damage in this approach is preferable to the guilt of breaking routine.

Both Prophets are equally inclined towards simple appreciation and quiet surrender to one's aspect, but Seers are interested in everyone else's place in the universe. By suggesting both optimization and

restrictions, they subtly encourage Mage-like traits and worldviews: to **know** their aspect as it pertains to everyone, rationalizing it as an undercurrent to all behaviors, neutral and inescapable. The comfortability of their (somewhat rambling) lectures speaks to this, and they know how to frame good news or bad news on their “unbiased” terms. If you’ve had a long day, if you’ve screwed up, if life won’t let up, Seers can supply the quiet resolve of Mages to the people who really need it - and in turn, they see beauty in other people’s lives, how they intersect and weave to make more than the sum of their parts. However, this also means that it’s not very concrete or structured, and Seers struggle when pressed for clarity. While the outline is consistent, they play fast and loose with the details in order to stay relevant, highlighting the importance of levity so that curveballs do not invalidate them. To this end, their aspect is evolving vaugeries; predictions phrased as fate, warnings phrased as advice, desires phrased as universal, admiration phrased as fact, resignations phrased as impossibilities, as the tide you shouldn’t bother fighting - at least, not without their help, and certainly not while they’re not looking.

Couldn’t tell you what the conditions are. “Clear assessments that no one’s going to listen to anyways I guess” seems like the root, but...well, that’s a decision a child makes, and can come from a variety of different circumstances. The only consistency I can find is that they didn’t feel heard, but I suppose when that’s your primary concern...

Rain or shine, Seers appear as nothing more or less than everpresent, confident guidance...but that’s just what they want you to think. Mage-like confident stoicism is only apparent in their role as a people-oriented passive class, doubling as bluster to protect the personal vulnerabilities that do not fall under that category: embarrassing(?) hobbies, emotional indecision, and self-sabotage ranging from negligence to death-seeking. In what is going to be a pattern for passive classes, Seers clearly need the exact method of help they offer everyone else...but their method of processing this hypocrisy is to pretend it doesn’t exist, arguing irrelevancy or exception. No matter how cherished their friends are, Seers will insist (with varying defensiveness) they are all unqualified to the task, which would be a waste of effort and resources anyways. Seers are a surprisingly competitive lot, but not to prove they’re better than everyone else so much as smarter - and on that note, “playfully manipulative” is a subjective designation. Seers are downright invasive cataloguing everyone’s incentives and sore spots, unable to play angel-on-the-shoulder without angles. All the while, there’s still that buried selfishness, influencing Seers’ direction and making them more erratic the less they can hide that’s what’s happening; that despite all efforts to present otherwise, they do not, in fact, have their shit together, or even your best interests at heart. One way or another,

this ends in disaster, leaving every Seer guaranteed to fall off the wagon and only struggling to do so quietly - disillusionment or doubling down is a coinflip. Seers do their best to stay two steps ahead of everyone else's issues and five steps ahead of their own, but often at the expense of knowing where they're going - like, say, off a cliff.

Homestuck's Seers (even borderline joke character Kankri) serve as suitable enough demonstration of what this all looks like; tune out the supernatural elements and, the fact is, addiction and toxic relationships are exactly the kind of thing to look for. Sure, the role of Seers can feel too tied to the convenience of fiction's need for expositional characters, but I still *met* real Seers, and the blueprint holds true to bags of flesh and bones. Course, as is my usual problem with this document, even when you understand someone's problems, that doesn't automatically give you any solution to them.

Prospit Seers genuinely believe in their method: they poke, question, suggest, console, and the world is (probably) a better place for it. They do all this casually, even implicitly, fostering their preferred social role (or even career) through little else besides following their nose. As they see it, they're just doing what needs doing, thinking little of these instincts beyond it's what a good friend or citizen ought to do. This earnestness ensures they have a rather static place in groups, where anyone who wants to listen to them is already listening, and anyone else knows what to expect. While it all might come across as "one-note", this is from intentionally embracing their role, and not from actual simplicity; you learn more about them from their hobbies, not their conversations, even if they're explicitly trying to keep your attention somewhere else. This modest zealotry invariably leads to blindspots, making Prospit Seers unprepared for a lack of clear and clean solutions: the world is either simple, or it ought to be. Importantly, this sentiment extends to themselves, as while Prospit Seers are everything already discussed, they tend to genuinely believe their excuses that their baggage doesn't - or *shouldn't* - bother them. Personal interests and issues are deprioritized, sometimes admitted by accident in a tangent, all from someone more comfortable phrasing such things as if it was someone else's emotions and ennui. There's self-loathing between the cracks, but they'll just stuff it deeper down with an "out of sight, out of mind" mentality that fools themselves as much as anyone else - and if it *doesn't* fool you, it's an uphill battle trying to broach the subject past Seer defensiveness running on autopilot. It might kill them someday, but if you really can get them to open up about it, then they probably think it already has in every way that matters.

Terezi is weird. Kankri is too, but less from eccentricity so much as, again, being a borderline joke character. Frustratingly, I don't know any of this variant personally - only some guesses on an old family friend who still might've been a Derse Seer, and a couple girls from high school I never knew well enough.

Pop culture gives a rough shape, no clearer than the old cliché of "nosy girl reporter", but picking a character from that archetype can still give said archetype too much

influence, blotting out the subtleties of the real psychology while conditioning people to only recognize it in specific extremes. Honestly - and humor me on this one - Breaking Bad's Mike seems a fit, and *maybe* RDR2's Hosea if he's not a Derse Seer. That "crime syndicate's grizzled voice of reason" can seem odd to link next to aforementioned girl reporters should, hopefully, only reiterate how much stereo/archetypes can become increasingly foreign to the classpect root it grew from (which is assuming I'm right on those in the first place). Certainly, expectations and fantasies of gender play into all that, with Seers being one of two classes I know for damn certain aren't locked...but, getting into all of those ramifications and contemplations could be its own friggin book.

Anyways, I'll edit any worthwhile personal stories involving a Prospit Seer here when I've got one. Hopefully, even with so much secondhand, I can still help identify you or someone you know. Maybe I can do enough of a good job on the other entries to bank on the process of elimination...

Derse Seers don't believe in the *method*, per se, but certainly the *results*; contradiction and compromise are strategies in a high-stakes game that not everyone realizes they're playing, and maybe it's best they don't. Derse Seers speak with purpose, but deliberately weave double-talk and sarcasm through it that you might let your guard down; comedy, compliments, and criticism are all chosen tactically, from someone who isn't even hiding that they're up to something, only the *specifics*. Their observations and principles are more malleable, far more accepting of depressing outcomes and dysfunction as "just the way things are" - yet, obsessive to the opportunities they're confident are in reach, where outright manipulation or self interest can still be writ as some "greater good". The know-it-all superiority of Seers is clearer here, if only because all facets of the illusion are consciously recognized, and purposefully oversaturating their image as "resident smartypants" reinforces that armor. Mind you, this doesn't mean honest self-reflection so much as deeply engrained personal myths; to define *why* it's so important they repress themselves and misdirect others, and how special their circumstances are that of *course* they can't admit that to those that wouldn't understand. Flip the spotlight and force it out of them, and it's clear they're not Mages: they might stammer and stumble, or lash out in a graceless, defensive aggression. If they can't hide *or* deflect *or* rationalize being a codependent, directionless blabbermouth, then all that's left is to play it for a laugh...but there's not much to laugh about the longer you look. They probably know that - they probably always knew that. They just didn't want you to know.

Tricky people. Even with Rose as a constant character for nearly the whole comic, it's hard to see the generalized traits separated from her own singular identity - though, Naoto from Persona 4 is pretty synch'd with Rose's characteristics. Still, my knowledge of Seers is limited, so taking all those eccentricities at face value rather than oversaturation is hard to do until I see it in the flesh. Diane from Bojack Horseman is a good example of a more "normal" one, and even God of War 4's Mimir - severed head and "smartest man alive" or not - demonstrates the class's conniptions and methods with depth.

While I'm still sparse on definitive Prospit Seers, I've got more luck with Dersites, and one was a genuine close friend. I met her back in the punk house I used to live in; Hopebound and proud, helped keep the spirit of the place up and navigate the extreme personalities. Impatient with others, sure, but she always knew how to bounce back and persuade them in directions - or guilt, sometimes. I remembered her fondly.

I spent years working on this on and off, going about my life, before she and I crossed paths again - figured she could move in for awhile, catch her breath from some rough breaks. What followed was...horrible. Her just seeing what she could get away with, treating me like a mark, breaking promises and missing deadlines while her room filled with so much hoarded decomposing trash you couldn't see the floor. I swear, she thought she was slick just because it made more sense to nod along rather than confront her constant, neverending stream of lies; I tried a heart-to-heart, and she acted like I shit on her porch. She was a human carwreck who lectured other people as a coping mechanism to pretend she didn't need lectures herself - and that's about as low as a Seer can get.

For all I'm going to write, there is a narrative creeping at the corners of it: that higher intensity classes are all wild power mongers, and lower intensities are disciplined and modest. I do stand by many classes being more dangerous risks than others...but, no matter the odds, "snake eyes" looks about the same across anyone. We are all shit as a species, and our ability to rise above and be decent is measured in margins.

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Unarmed by choice, a voice heard often as readily as unheeded, unneeded. To a village or nation, public or private, the one privy to the prophecies of all who meet those distant eyes; enchanted and enlightened, humbled and in service. To see how they live, struggle, die, all in the greater scope - twists of fate, connected and echoing, evolving and conspiring. You help them brace for it when they ask you to break it; soothe the nerves of the dually destined and doomed, longing for hope and help that won't or will. Your hand guides the errant and erratic down a road with no forks - none worth it, at least, nor worth mentioning. If every card is face up, better tarot than poker, when you're the only dealer with nothing your own to wager. The bluff becomes to convince people what the game is, lest ignorance outwit knowledge and undo the distinction between - between you and every other mortal. The complacency of the learned beguiles the cacophony of what we want and are and will be, serving as no safety for the Seer's susceptibility. There is nothing sacred in weaving the strings of fate, nor sin in cutting them, or permanence to either; in witness to hubris, you were blind to your own. Prophecies are a promise as much as prediction, all as fragile as the one who peddles them...and, perhaps, just as powerful. You may not be made for crowns, but you can always coax its ear; it may not be your fight, but that doesn't mean it couldn't be, or that others won't fight yours. No matter how the future intimidates, no one need face it alone - not even you.

Go make your own decisions.

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MAGICIANS

(GUIDES, TINKERERS, PRETENDERS)

Adapting an aspect isn't so drastic as to warp and misshape it carelessly - at the first tier of it, there's more you can accept than take issue with. Without meaning to do much, the rest is brought with it; simple and subtle, a spark of magic **changes** everything. Of course, magic is under scrutiny, and these two know that best; it's easy for them to assume they are frauds and charlatans, manipulating people under the pretext of care. To the weilder, it is most obvious what trickery and misdirection is employed...but there's always something that can't be explained, isn't there?

WITCHES are guileful innovators, finding a path forward from the sidelines or in the wake of others. Playful and imaginative, they enjoy the little things in life, and try to avoid drama or stress; however, they maintain a firm grip at the reigns of their own life, and don't budge easy to the wills of others (even if they pretend to). Curious and carefree whim is cultivated into their own little world to carry with them, to be shared with a handful of people they trust; it's not like they're *hurting* anyone (usually), it's just an idle apathy to unpleasant facts, often annoying those who found it so endearing under different circumstances. They bluff past alot of obstacles in their life, readily lean on stronger voices, and almost always land on their feet. Witches come off as kind, agreeable, "cute", and altogether straightforward...and while *some* of this is true, Witches will readily deny any and all of it if they feel cornered. Dry resentment and unworthiness brim below the surface, built on unchecked assumptions, with pain placated by relationships and distractions. Witches will always have their own interpretation of how high the stakes are, of how genuine they were, of vapidty or hidden depths of those around them, and trying to directly poke holes in the inconsistencies of these speeches tends to make things worse. Ultimately, the skewed truth is *their* truth, and it's as important for others to realize how vitally important it is to Witches as it is for Witches themselves to not undersell everything they're capable of.

Have to go harder on this one. Play all nice, and it's all surface. Not accurate enough. That's the thing about Witches, whether it's media examples or firsthand/secondhand experiences with them, everyone always misses the point, remembers them wrong, while Witches themselves encourage misinformation. It's a tragedy - their tragedy. So frustrating, but there's no easy way to take a swing without confirming everything they already assume. I'll be honest, I'm probably still too close to this.

It feels pertinent to mention I'm sticking by a rule of neutral language, both for gender-questioning types, and because I don't want to firmly claim classes are all AMAB or all AFAB in the name of professionally acknowledging the potential for exceptions, despite the mounted evidence to the contrary. In case I haven't been clear, I don't think it *matters* if chromosomes link to classes, and it feels damaging to progressive causes to argue that it is unacceptable if they do. I bring this up because Witches appear, in 100% of individuals I have observed, to be AFAB only. Wiccans are just so goddamn popular in queer circles, I need to be *crystal clear* that anyone saying "Look at me, the AMAB Witch" is 99.99% of the time a misunderstanding. If you're trans, you're valid, and you can't

let your class turn into a burden you feel you need to shed just because of a couple of syllables. If you're a transman Witch feeling irked from the other side of things, I'd just swap the name to "Druid", but if you go for "Witcher" I feel I have to pre-emptively make a lengthy explanation for why Geralt of Rivia would not count (though the jury's out on Triss). TLDR: everything written here, because we're still talking about class #3, first tier of adaptation. Maybe there really is an exception out there, but don't get grumpy cause I won't offer easy answers - if this document does a good enough job letting you spot them, then you'll be prepared to spot yourself. Don't fuck with my flowcharts. Please. For your own sake.

Witches are not especially complicated, but they are *subtle*. Their instructions are a blend of expressing their interests, hiding their gripes, wrapped around adapting to others expectations (or the expectations of others expectations). Yes, okay, fine, just calling it "playful curiosity" gets the point across, but it's a throughline they live their life by: to **change** their aspect, adjusting what personally bothers them in the moment without ever straining themselves. While this might sound selfish (and can be), Witches do *want* to help their friends and make the world a better place. It can be exciting trying to share their insight and spirit, but it's a delicate thing; their influence stays in their bubble, and it's likely to pop if they reach out too far, or if anyone asks too many questions. Witches do their best work when it all seems straightforward, and that can make their skewed perception of stakes an advantage - to not overthink grand ramifications in the heat of things, dragged down by other's dramatics. A Witch's aspect is whatever they need it to be, yet always a little more than that; distractions from fatalism, carefree trespassing, twitchy fingers, white lies, natural flow, romanticized tragedies, bittersweet contentment, games of mischief, unabashed compassion, customer service smiles, and a nameless mark on the world - always, forever and only, theirs.

Childhood environments vary, but the approach seems consistent: distractions, always, from issues they couldn't resolve. Could be boredom, loneliness, or abusive parents. Doesn't matter how bad it sounds, they'll walk it off - with a limp.

There are snags and schisms with Witches, but it's important to address them carefully; expecting them to fit a mold, or endure stress longer than they can, is so often what leads to arguments. Of course, Witches will usually *attempt* to meet requests (real or imagined) initially, creating a self-fulfilling prophecy of broken masks, hyperbolic heartbreak, and floodgated fatalism as soon as they run out of stamina - the Witch-Spiral-Speech_(tm) of "I'm not who you thought I was, I can't be that person, and there's nothing left to say". Burnt bridges (real or imagined) only justify the instincts, meaning that while many people may know them, only a few get close. Witches hold the firmest grip deciding who sees their most genuine, private selves, and even more control deciding which *parts* of that self; illusion and truth are measured in percentages, always still with a secret they're prepared to die with. With this in mind, Witches are often most comfortable with those that fit their fantasies, who don't pry past what's offered,

who accept their excuses of “I’m just being silly/I don’t know what I’m talking about”, and accommodate their perceptions of worthlessness rather than challenge it. There’s only so far they can fall back on justifications of whim, human nature, or apathy, and they know that; Witches don’t expect to be saved, forgiven, or understood by anything less than the hero they want - even if it’s gutting to *lose* that status. Lashing out and demonizing Witches only feeds the self-hatred swirling at the root of it - and with that in mind, it’s important to specify that Witches are *never* as bad as they say they are. They just want to exist, relax, and cause trouble on their terms; to be heard as an individual, with a legacy no greater than “fun” and “helped people who deserved it more”. If they keep thinking there’s no place for them, they’ll keep running past all the ones they have.

It’s hard to know what to say. I’m not a therapist, and there’s no clean solution here. Maybe there never is, but I can’t even pretend on this one, you know? Witches are tricky; I can’t just say “be braver”, “trust yourself more”, “trust others more”, or anything else you could stick on a bumper sticker. Sometimes the problems aren’t problems altogether. Sometimes that’s bullshit, sometimes that’s just their bullshit, and they’ll sort it or not sort it at their discretion. If they put all their trust in someone to define them, it’s usually someone sketchy. I don’t know. Every move feels like the wrong move. All I can really say here is, they’re not alone. There’s others with their archetype who’ve gone through all the same thrills, and all this “my friends would never accept these parts of me” thoughts aren’t always true. At least, they keep trying to engineer scenarios that *make* them true, and I’m hurt seeing it happen over and over again.

You know, as far as personal rules go, I accept people making “bad” decisions so long as they’re informed. Past all the showmanship, I just hope any Witch reading this becomes a bit more self-aware about what they’re doing, and what their options are.

Prospit Witches are much more Sabrina than crop-killing monster. They’re positive, polite, and idealistic; reality often meets them harshly, and not if they can help it. While they can be tricky to pin down in driving purpose, their track record often speaks for itself: happy hobbyists, an aura of amicability, casually opinionated, contextually careless. Their presentation is mirthful often despite their circumstances; maybe it feels like they decided a long time ago they didn’t want to grow up, but it’s a conscious decision made by a sober mind, and not held past the point of reason. They’ll...*try* to stick it out for friends who ask too much or rub them the wrong way, but they also might ghost and hope no one notices. If this all sounds like sunshine, that’s because it’s designed to be; Prospit Witches are everything already discussed, but take every high and low in stride. Masks will drop without fanfare, then snap back to their face as soon as the moment’s bitterness is exchanged; misfortune is endured as long as no one else is getting hurt, alternatives writ off as “too much trouble”. Their skewed stakes are not just preferred, but trusted, blossoming blind spots that always come back to bite later. Their health and heart are still very personal, and the rules on disclosure can seem (or be) inconsistent. They’re prone to reestablish their walls

and routines even if critical secrets are unveiled, simply refusing to acknowledge the lost status quo; press it, even with stated goals of building something better, and the Witch-Spiral-Speech^(tm) is still on the table. All in all, Prospit Witches are very good at hiding their scars (metaphorical or otherwise), but tend to be oblivious if those wounds are still bleeding - or they just stopped caring.

Jade Harley is weird. Good, but weird. Chixie from Friendsim, despite only having her aspect off a notch, helps provide a more “grounded” example of a Prospit Witch. Honestly a good readily-available pop culture one is Nancy Wheeler of Stranger Things, for what that’s worth. In my narrow sphere of interests (and I’d argue a pretty interesting one) is one of the later minds from Psychonauts 2, which goes the extra mile of making the Witch-Spiral-Speech the boss of that level. Uncanny.

That whole scenario reminds me too much of a friend of mine. I don’t think I can show that friend what I wrote here, unless it’s a hail-mary of me giving up trying to patch everything splintered between us. If you are reading this - and for all Prospit Witches in general -, I hope you take something from this for the future, even if it sounds more resigned than my usual writing.

Derse Witches are the ones to worry about, but usually more for their sake than yours. They’re generally cheery, but not “optimistic”, strictly speaking; they’re matter-of-fact towards both the world’s evils and their own, finding delights within the macabre rather than in spite of it. Appropriately, this compounds their sense of being an “other” to the world, making the dance of masks more intricate and articulated; they can range from dignified-yet-damaged sages, wild free spirits, apathetic sadists, or innocent brats. While all this lessens the chance of accidental (or blindly denied) self-sabotage, Derse Witches are prone to simply embrace the collision course: to live on the run, cozy up to volatile individuals, burn bridges within an hour of the transgression, and not look back and see which bad decision is going to be the one that finally catches up to them. More than seclusion, there is a pull to outright suicidal ideation: “You’ll be better off when I’m gone”, said with a smile, ready to rationalize the reactions it incites. Mind you, there’s cracks in this bravado - compassion and hesitation that does not feed the narrative of “hedonistic blight” - but the threat of dropping the knife means they’ll twist it to be taken seriously. If things seem fine, they’d like to believe it’s because they did the mercy of lying to you...but if things *are* better than they seem, if everyone already *knew* the secrets, if there *is* a potential for uncompromised happiness, that doesn’t mean they’ll budge. It’s never about direct problem solving, it’s about trust - no shortcuts, substitutions, or second-tries.

Everyone knows her, even if you haven’t met her. Long phillisophical conversations, weighed down by addictions, screws her boyfriend’s brother and dies before she’s 40. She’s sometimes in the movies, but always in the songs; a diamond who wants to stay coal; the girl who warns you not to fall in love with her.

I have a friend who’s a Derse Witch of Space (she’s the one who made the globe). It is charming how much she resembles Jade Harley, straight down to syntax, hobbies, and even dreams. It’s more unnerving hearing her glee at messing with people’s emotions and

watching things unravel, or her equal glee reminiscing on a past of abusive and toxic lovers. I wouldn't trade her for the world.

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Wrinkle in the weave, walking barefoot in the woods, withdrawn from the workshops and windows of decent men and decent roads. Witches are infamous, segregated by purpose, but mutual curiosity makes meetings despite the warnings. Seeker or suitor, for malady or malaise, Witches provide panacea at a price. Light breaks through the canopy and illuminates illusions; concoctions and cantrips circumvent convention and certainties. Through it all, a wilt to the smile, a limp in the dance, a wonder past the weakness entices the woefully misinformed - the Witch cannot be saved, and cannot save you. Tinctures to numb, rituals to forget, shadows to hide, all methods of survival from a creature that would rather not be at all. Betrayal was always the deal, always followed by the lynch; "burn the Witch, the house, the woods", just to make you flinch. In the sum of their desperations, reflected off the smoke, the one they wanted - who never was, never could be. Your body, not your soul; your heart, not your mind. In ashes, maybe no one could tell the difference anymore, and maybe that's the kindness...and maybe it isn't. A bitter end fits the book, but forgets that you aren't fiction; if the truth is to disappoint, then kill closure with it. If they want a demon, be one that doesn't die; if they want a miracle, fix the real pain; if they want flesh, don't pretend its anything else. The bygone truth of Witches is leaders, respected and revered, keen to the world not through privilege but patience. Pay attention to yourself, and realize you were half-right: you never needed saving in the first place.

Go cause some trouble.

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HEIRS are kind, compassionate, and defined by well-intentioned judgements; even if people don't agree, Heirs always find a way to get a word in without losing the room. They naturally slide into social groups, and quickly establish an environment where people look to them for support. They know how to communicate their thoughts effectively and without making things too personal, forcing people to reconcile themselves on their own terms rather than get caught up in a battle of egos. They don't like friends fighting, mediating disagreements in a variety of ways but always prone to a "I think what Steve is *trying* to say is..." hijacking. Altruistic, determined, and cherished, Heirs are, more often than not, all these things - but the

one lie is “carefree”. Underneath the “perfect friend” is someone who thinks everything is going to go to shit if they don’t administrate, and this solemn responsibility is both rarely admitted and rarely up for debate. Heirs avoid recognizing any grand conclusion their small interventions make, but that’s as much humility as it is plausible deniability; no pride for praise, only in deciding everyone else’s best available option every single time. Heirs almost always have a point, and they almost never have anything to gain - but if they don’t or do respectively, they’re “sticky” enough in arguments that you might doubt yourself. It’s easy to misread an Heir’s approach as a lack of confidence (and it might be a little), but often the *implication* of heirarchy is simply preferable. Heirs believe that they alone must be the one who will fix everyone else’s problems, but past the legitimate ability and invisible arrogance, there’s someone who doesn’t know how to be anything else.

Equius overthinks it, John underthinks it, Mituna doublethinks it - between the three of them, I get it if Heirs seem a little hard to define. I’m privileged to know quite a few, and they’re thankfully pretty open to invasive questions - if suddenly hesitant the moment I try to draw conclusions. Not “defensive” just...it’s overprotective is all, you know?

Heirs are diligent, despite often coming off as docile. Their programming is simple enough: “make things better for people”, with their aspect as a series of nebulous and malleable guidelines. This doesn’t mean they’re lazy, far from it; Heirs are a living counterbalance, becoming increasingly motivated, protective, and even controlling when they feel the situation requires it. This call to action is subtle enough that it can be the only reason they speak up and get creative at all, making their autonomy as individuals completely intertwined with their sense of purpose: they **change** their environment with their aspect, but also **change** themselves into what they think the world needs them to be. This is drawing from the same mask-making tools as Witches, but zero’d in on direction and damage control, being that it is “supposedly” seperated from their wants and biases. Despite all of this, they frequently don’t know what’s so special about themselves specifically, when it’s more obvious from the outside how their track record creates an outline of what they bring to the table. Their aspect is their curious questions, their double-checking, their helpful reminders, their 11th hour miracles, the rare heated argument, the calm hand of suggestion, what they’ve got under control, the possibilities that can’t be ruled out yet, and the eternal well-spring of solutions that truly does feel like an inherited birthright sometimes.

“Chosen One” indeed, but not because they actually *are* destined - the dragon existed before the prophecy. More bluntly, all signs point to an Heir’s childhood environment locking in their habits, as they grew up having to be the parent that no one else was being, but *someone* clearly had to be. Even with Homestuck’s own, it’s easy to see how

John and Equius politely argue with the traditions threatening to swallow them (even if Equius seemed to cave at the end). It also explains resentments Heirs often have towards that responsibility, as it was always an emergency situation - something that shouldn't happen twice in a just world. Pity it sticks. Pity they're so good solving everyone else's problems, that people actually *will* ask them to keep doing it despite the damage. And they can. We are so often at the mercy of our delusions.

There is a downside to the rush of endorphins that come with rising to the challenge and saving the day - eventually, you win, and you're no longer needed. To an Heir's credit, they generally (hopefully) don't directly incite trouble just to play savior, but that makes it a bit more subtle; it means letting people know "I'm always here to listen", and never turning *down* codependency; it means never saying a crisis is 100% resolved, leaving the door open for relapse; it means casting vague doubts if something's done without the Heir's magic touch, implying only one final seal of approval; it means planting themselves in center of very toxic dynamics, being everyone's shoulder to cry on. Heirs have an alarming addiction to "loops" like these, where they're placating a crisis rather than closing it. It's hard for anyone (even them) to notice, since they're reflexive in framing arguments in other people's "best interests" - and who's to say comfort isn't a substitute for solutions anyways? The cracks are slow, but they add up from one of three reasons: a problem they can't solve, solving all problems and getting "twitchy", or pure stressed-out exhaustion. Whichever one it is (or maybe all three), Heirs are finally confronted with their *own* baggage...and that isn't something they're prepared for, or want any help with. Who they were feels "fake", leaving them to drift off and seclude. They might be back in a month. Or a decade. Or never.

John suddenly becoming depressed and Equius suddenly becoming useless weren't really surprises - it was an inevitability ticking down from the moment they existed. It's just as inevitable in real life. It's very difficult getting them to brace for it - hopefully, through this document or whatever else, not impossible.

Prospit Heirs might be frustrating sometimes, but they're almost impossible to stay mad at. Preferring to live life on autopilot, they perform all an Heir's duties of questioning everything without questioning their habits, and keep the mood light in all moments inbetween. They don't overthink their advice, don't get caught up on grand consequences, and also don't often think they can be wrong - at worst, what's a few harmless questions and words of warning? They prefer free-wheeling through volatile situations, ignoring what might be difficult to comprehend and only focusing on resolving what *does* make sense. They're good listeners, but a little sour if they aren't making any headway with people, which makes them more likely to quit if they get too frustrated - at least, until the topic gets brought up again. While Prospit Heirs are never *truly* ignorant of the conniptions, affirming it without acknowledging it can make them surprisingly dangerous; overstepping boundries, overtrusting instincts, and outright infantilizing friends can happen casually. Much like Prospit

Witches before them, they'd prefer to stick to their routines even if something serious happens, and can be stubbornly resigned if no one plays ball. Confrontations can lead to denial, withdrawal, or simply addressing symptoms and not the root - which is, of course, still a time-bomb of an Atlas Complex. When their patience finally wears thin, their tempers surprise even them; too much feels unfamiliar and alien, unworkable, all at once. There's a lot bottled up, and they're not measuring the breaking points.

I'm sure one could laugh and put Spongebob or something here. I mean maybe, there's plenty of happy dorks trying to cheer up sadsacks that play well in media...you just have to realize why real people exhibit these habits. Most of the time, Prospit Heirs are the "generic protagonist hero". Much like Witches and the "girl next door" archetype, it's an active effort to keep up, and only fiction provides the mask without the motive.

Homestuck's own John Egbert can be difficult to read past "comedic dork", and his gradual depression and lack of energy going forward in the story can feel out of left field. It isn't. My own brother is a Prospit Heir of Breath, and, while grumpier, he's done all the same things for all the same reasons, straight down to drifting away from people (and, on a more comedic note, preferring hammers in Monster Hunter, and installing trainers and debug modes for every game we play). Guy puts himself in too many bad situations; I feel guilty knowing I was one of them, growing up. He forgives me. I'm relatively certain he'd do that regardless of how sorry I was.

Derse Heirs are therapists who need therapists. Careful on what would tip things too far or be too bold to say, Derse Heirs hold their tongues, believing recklessness breeds catastrophe. They're good at what they do, but are the most prone to throw themselves too far into impossible goals with a martyr's masochism - content only in chaos and toil, proving themselves through bleeding hands and broken spirit. Too often they fear their friendly face is a fraudulent facade, only a mask to their violent impulses and desire to control others, only held back through self-control. They're calm because they believe the world needs them to be calm; beating the shit out of someone (who probably has it coming) violates their presentation, despite being a part of their most honest self. The explosive components of their personality are consciously recognized, and the process of holding themselves together so they can hold everyone else together is often internally mythologized. Much like Derse Witches before them, they'd like to believe your comfort is because they did you the mercy of lying to you; also like Derse Witches, there's still a lot of kindness that doesn't fit their narrative of "manipulative tyrant". If they walk away from it all, they'll have reasons why they can't go back, but it's usually still reflecting someone trying to frame it for everyone else's benefit and not "I don't want to." Getting them to open up with all their pain, philosophy and politics is something you either do in a safe environment, or something they do alone - and it'll *always* be messy.

Equius is...interestin'. Weird society, weird kid, and he knows that. Also, a kid - Derse Heirs seem to round out more as they go along. Would've been nice to see more of that. Poor guy. Top 5 characters, I swear.

I've got a very close friend who always had Heir traits. I never really understood how much goes through their heads until he gave me a shot with all this, letting me put Equius next to his traumas and secrets, comparing and contrasting ("Inherit Nothing" is such a good song). It's helped me see all this more clearly, and I hope you will too. Failing that, watch Steven Universe Future.

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A world in chaos, mired in misfortune, draped in darkness. Sickness spreads in body and spirit, as broken souls wait for a cure that walks; in tales and song, in myth and prophecy, a hero built entirely of expectations. It doesn't matter if you seek them, or they seek you; it doesn't matter if you live among luxury or lumber; it doesn't matter if you were stolen from birth awaiting this day, or remain baffled at a bloodline too ancient to remember. All that has ever mattered - to those that decide such things - is the sole spark that pulls swords from stones, heals the sick, and rallies armies to action. Through you, it will all come to pass...but evil is beaten but not broken, people unite but do not trust, and you lead without a crown; peace today, but what of tomorrow? Miracles made manifest puts doubts to rest, unless one has the hands that did it; superstition salivates for a savior, and settled for smoke and mirrors. The Heir inherits boon and burden both, unable to tell the difference behind an invincible smile and a broken brow. In stalemate, survival; what is a warrior without a war? The script calls for more than you are prepared to give, but to see it as a curse only hides it is a crutch: the stories are smoke, but the flesh and deeds still stand. The fighter, the diplomat, and everything else; a free will so autonomous it believed itself automatic. In truth, evil will win sometimes, good men will scatter, if either was good or evil to begin with. The stories guaranteed nothing, only you did - as did everyone around you. If you are not a slave to superstition, than those that follow won't be either, even to real magic. So rule and reform, war till' everything bleeds, flee to new frontiers, or walk a hundred paths between. All that has ever mattered - to you, who decides such things - is to do it right.

Be who you want to be, for yourself or others...but know the difference.

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SERVANTS (SOLDIERS, ROADIES, SLAVES)

Seeing an aspect for what it is is one thing, but it's not going to be enough for everybody. Following the rules for the sake of itself can seem a waste - where's the tangible benefit? How hard do you have to work before the system pays off? Isn't this aspect supposed to be

“good”, not just “comfortable”? The Servants trade intuition for initiative, trying to **exploit** the immutable into ideal states of problem-solving for as many as possible, refusing to accept its validity if it doesn’t meet these expectations. However, this struggle with the application often makes the definition that much more unstable. Without a Prophet’s eye, Servants can wind up with others defining their aspect for them, or not catch themselves playing far more pragmatically than they advertise themselves to be; friends and problems are both far more contextual than can be easily admitted. Life is chaos, but where the Prophets could see that itself as parity, it’s an ordeal to force that same chaos into something *favourable*. Optimized, weaponized, brick by brick rearranged until it’s “right” - then collapsed, when “right” stops making sense anymore. That’s fine. Back to blueprints. Someone’s gotta do it.

PAGES are wistful dreamers, quick to apologize and quick to offer help to anyone around them. They’re plagued by both crippling doubt and wild ambition, commonly exhibiting a stop-and-start confidence: charismatic promises, followed by imploding into a mess of apologies and self-flagellation. They’re attracted to romanticized stories of heroes and saviors, either emulating them (conditionally) or becoming attached to exciting people in their lives. Despite this, they’re often ashamed and self conscious of their interests, while being incapable of shutting up about it. Many remain punching bags who only function through escapism and living by proxy, but they can never truly ignore their desires; stubbornly opinionated behind their bashful exterior, Pages are on a long journey to untangle themselves and find the confidence to say everything they ever felt needed saying. This means continually experimenting with their presentation, trying to find the right approach, ruleset, and knowledge to align their principles with a world they’re tentative to confront. They may eventually find their confidence, embodying an impossible larger-than-life persona...or, spend the rest of their lives living in the shadow of who they wish to be.

Important disclosure: I am a Page.

Mages and Pages are related to each other like T-Rexes and chickens: understandable, once you get past the insult. Both are weighed down by personal dogma, a lifestyle that must conform to conviction and respect limitation. Yet, where Mages take simple pleasures in a life of neutrality, Pages have a taste for adventure in a world with something to lose...and they’re *going* to lose (at least from the onset). Not content to be idle, but averse to overconfidence, Pages struggle to find answers that work for anyone and solutions where everybody

wins without sacrificing efficiency or dignity; to **exploit** their aspect (and themselves) by focusing on what works, downplaying what doesn't, and to aim it all at the right cause. Obviously, this is (initially) impossible, and these ambitions inflict an irreparable schism to all Pages: a persistent disbelief that they are - or even *could* be - the person their brain says they *must* be. With all the variables that stem from this - of trying to rise to the challenge, live with compromise, or champion someone more "qualified" - one of the most consistent qualities of Pages is their diplomatic encouragements (likely because that kind of gentle advice is what *they* wish they'd get more of). Still, their worries and conniptions piggyback on this projection, often making attempts at altruism tongue tied by holding others to a personal code. Fundamentally, Pages do not serve people, but their gut; they automatically filter daydreams into obsessions, opinions into judgements, and childhood fantasies into standards of success. The stereotypical fragility of Pages stems from these unfulfilled labours...but even if they do find confidence to speak their mind, it's going to take more work to not make it sound uppity. Their aspect manifests as idle fantasies, reassuring mantras, bumper sticker wisdom, stubborn sticking points, indignant outbursts, codes of honor, and (if they get their shit together) the superhero bravado of their ideal self.

I know my story. I know the Pages in Homestuck lean the same way. I'd probably get more out of real Pages if I could talk to them - the only other Page I really know is Doombound, which...creates some issues. Mages accept their aspect because they see it as their lot in life - at one point, it was, and now they just don't reach far enough. Pages...it should be no surprise Pages distance themselves from their own brain, blame themselves for wanting more. Someone pushed something on them - could be parents, or just something from society that kept their attention as a kid - and they rushed ahead to meet that standard before realizing how absolutely unqualified they were. Failure, handicaps, or simple inadequacy are not coincidences to the Pages: they appear to be a quintessential ingredient, *especially* as they pertain to their chosen aspect. You can't save the world when you're already living in an apocalypse. You can't be a free spirit when you're helplessly dependent on others. Can't slink off into nothing when you're a public aristocrat. Can't meet the world head on when you're too autistic to even belong in it.

And you can't stop thinking about it. Can't stop identifying with it. It's you. You're a failure in trying to be you. Why? What about the doubt, isn't that you too? Not in the way you want, where all your instincts keep clawing and screaming at you. So fuck you for wanting it; you must be greedy, you must be not good enough, someone else should be here in your place. Your name is wrong, your flesh is wrong, your fucking soul is wrong. You don't deserve to be yourself.

Next person who says Pages are a passive class gets a fucking boot up the ass.

Pages are always looking forward, and forging a confident persona to press through their doubts never stops being an objective...but even if they haven't noticed, the over-apologizing bundle of burden is *also* a manufactured persona. The impossible fantasy of their ideal self intimidates, enshrining everything under its shadow; compromises between raw passion and pragmatism blur both into a glassy artifice, leaving Pages in a permanent state of theatre, believing and behaving

according to what they think is “necessary”. Reality can become distorted to the point that Pages blot out competing narratives, and while they’ll flagellate themselves for failures (even ones other people attribute to them), they have a huge blind spot when *they* are the aggressor; what they failed *and* what they wanted are both sanctified in their mind first and foremost. Selfishness and slights get wrapped up with moralizing, where Pages can see themselves as the tragic victim who deserves sympathy, accommodation, or someone else’s girl (or whoever). Resenting this part of their brains is not the same as killing it, and it’s often in the midst of self-loathing Pages will cave to impulse; a lifetime of agony trying to win an impossible race, they think stealing the prize might be their only option. On the other hand, confidence does not guarantee anything genuine: Pages are prone to downplay their transgressions, smoothing everything over as necessary, negligible, inevitable, or justified - rotating these motives only highlights insincerity. Fact is, Pages like getting what they want and making that sound like a good thing for everyone...but they’re still just as easily victims, tricked into thinking the core of their being needs to revolve around abusers. They’re natural manipulators who are still easily manipulated, depersonalized from everything but fantasy; every altruistic act or rallying cry is tainted by self-interest, desperate to drag their dreams close enough to finally reach.

I have problems. Most days, I have them under control, even if they never truly go away. I’ve had a lot of people gaslight me over the years, and I know that makes me predisposed to mimic it on top of natural Page...schemey, worm bullshit. I don’t always know when it happens, but I’m better when I do, and better when I act in a way I won’t have to make excuses for it. There’s enough stories about Pages where they find that confidence and become a proper hero - but I’ve met some sad, schemey old men who haunt me in every way I find them familiar. You want the self-actualization without the nobility, go check out Gotham’s Riddler...certainly dug up some bad memories on my end.

That Witch of Space pal of mine brought up how often sexual conquests or obsessions make up Page thought. She’s on to something, but I wouldn’t call it a rule - there’s an asexual Page out there somewhere, I’m sure. It *is*, however, a good example of how reliably the Page brain hypes itself up into only doing what it wanted to do in the first place.

Prospit Pages are probably the first thing that popped into your head when I was describing all this. Innocent, well-meaning, polite, with only pristine visions of a world where nothing bad ever happens and everything works out for everyone. Still marred by poor self-esteem, they’re more *confused* anyone sees potential in them rather than anything else - which can make them slow to accept change, waiting on a miracle rather than being practical. They try to live in accordance with law and order, but also miss when that blurs with their own principles; they’re very difficult to reason with if they’ve been properly riled up, as rare as that is to happen. More often than not, they’re simply polite and lost in their own little world, wildly enthusiastic about their hobbies and interests to the point of overwhelming people who listen. While they frequently apologize for

rambling (or during it, if they can't stop themselves), these are all the hallmarks of a Page still holding themselves back. The funny thing is, if they *do* get their act together, it's equally as comfortable: charming, cheery, averse to conflict and dignified in admitting fault, all so natural you'd think they were born that way. Of course it's still theatre; still the efforts of a flawed human to aspire to be aspirational, which will always leave cracks and artifice when they're out of their element. Either they can own it and use it to better empathize with those around them...or, pull back into the habits that "work" and try to sweep all that inconvenience under the rug. It's dependent on the person, let alone if they even make it that far in the first place.

Homestuck's got plenty of Pages, and they're primarily Prospits; Tavros and Jake, sure (count Tavros for the only one who hit his potential permanently, and all by himself), but there's also a more buttermilk-sour example in Zebede from Friendsim. I gotta mention My Hero Academia with Deku, though anime is honestly full of them anywhere you look.

Just as whimpering but with the added attribute of "*wicked*", **Derse Pages** are pressure cookers ready to either make a diamond or crack one. They're guarded, stressed, wracked with self-loathing, and eternally aware of the bleak future of broken dreams that they seem cursed to follow; as such, they remain in a constant state of course correction. They're often erratically anxious assistants, always at risk of falling into broken despondency, but flirting with "sick of your shit but still going to fix it" direct action the more they grow. Their self-awareness is often why they're so overwhelmed, being resentful to their own compulsions and lot in life, irritated at the irrationality of an innate "fault". They are more prone overall to manipulation or treachery, due to the fact that these are not breaks from their code entirely, but rather parts (not all) of the code itself - they tend to root for the bad guys, be it in fiction or news reports. Very aware of their dark thoughts, most Derse Pages try to stuff it down and "sanitize" themselves, which only makes for worse crimes when something snaps; if they don't make it heroic, it'll only ever be hedonistic. They can't ignore they have some strong opinions on morality, and that if the universe made any *goddamn sense* it would punish the guilty...but they're their first example of "guilty". They've gone too far before, and they will again, but what matters is not making the same mistakes twice. They truly do want to make the world beautiful, but they're willing to step over *alot* of people to get there - at least, far more than they're comfortable admitting.

Don't look at me like that.

Horuss - for as brief his appearances - hit close to home. Same for Xefros of Hiveswap fame (whose abusive best friend was...uncanny). Look, you ever see a moody little sadsack like Shinji from Evangelion and wanna shake him because you know he's underselling himself...I mean, you ever wonder where that stubbornness is coming from? Pages only learn the lessons we want to learn, and we'll tough through any lecture with the pent-up resentment that we still haven't had our chance to speak. Maybe we blow it. Maybe we've

got nothing good to say, and it's all as selfish as we keep loudly worrying it is. Just don't think the help we need is anything you can jam into us with enough force - we're the "most powerful class" for a reason.

Actually, you know who's a fantastic example? Chidi, of The Good Place. Sure, he's got the whole journey down, but Kant's philosophy feels the important takeaway; "acting in accordance with what you want to be a universal law" and all that. It's not suggesting that never lying will stop lying, only that it can be personally fulfilling - and isn't believing in "universal laws of virtue" what Pages are all about?

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Modest, honest, meager, eager - a face form fit for all manner of boots, irregardless of intent. A childhood traded for a headstart on trades; a promise there will be a seat at the table, after an eon of scrubbing it. The masters and artisans, the noble exemplars of house and hold, all sure to return generosity given; that one might shine their shoes and see if they fit, and carry their capes while mimicking their stride. Patience, patience, a Page's first virtue; the first brick of the long road, paving over all the mewling weakness. How inept the mind, how feeble the gait, how utterly unprepared to distant dangers. To sew and cook and dance and hunt and build and toil - to fail, all of it, every promise, as dead weight struggles to justify itself at the low bar of sycophant. Still, there's a safety in pity, and the runt is not without guile; any suggestion lands better from a lesser, sating little sins behind the smile. Guilt grows for every soul worse off, that you and the system let fall - but doubt weighs heavier, that your transgressions are exceptions at all. The greatest deceit of Pages was the first: that nobility is noble, and power fair. The glare of gold hides that men rust far easier, too petty and temperamental to measure up to their own marble. Corrupted by compromises, can't comprehend what they've squandered, can't admit they're cowards - can you? Or was it all prey to predator, better only in ability to bedazzle and embezzle? Maybe...but you were a sucker once too, weren't you? Maybe that was better - maybe you had it right the first time. Steel can be sharpened, ruin can be repaired, men can be trained; not failures, just far from fruition, so follow a friend who finds it all familiar. Real power is not taken, it is shared; it is noble and fair and kind. The promise is yours to keep Page, because whether you'd sell it or serve it, your perfect world doesn't exist - not until you build it.

Show them what you're made of.

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KNIGHTS are loyal, consistent, tough, and so compulsively humble they'll refuse to admit any of it. They naturally drift into becoming the fulcrum for friend groups (with slight favourites), handling tasks most

would find monotonous or stifling. They share a Page's flair for self-deprecating theatrics, but often meant more to playfully (or aggressively) annoy rather than endear. Whether it's casual socializing or dire situations, Knights specialize in bravado and persona - they do not show weakness, and do not bring down the mood with their own problems. While they frequently double down on their walls and defenses when pressed for honesty, they do have speeches ready for those moments; that this is their burden to bear, all they're allowed to be, so someone else can shine brighter...but, these are the lies of someone who isn't the main character of their own life. Cracks always appear eventually, as the Knight lifestyle is inherently unsustainable both from stress and idealized "standard" that never was. Selfless sacrifice is a great idea on paper, but respecting them for the struggle only distracts from the fact that they don't have to. Rules and restriction drive them forward, but limits their potential; they fight a battle they do not expect to win, but they absolutely *can* as soon as they believe they deserve to.

I swear Latula is the most functioning Knight in Homestuck, and most of that is just being REALLY GOOD at pretending everything's fine. Look, if this entry sounds harsh, it's that I don't want to romanticize hurting yourself so everyone else is okay - even if Knights do good, it should never be at the cost of their soul. They all think it has to.

"An idealized image of everyone else while personally failing to self-care" is a carry-over from Seers, but the higher stakes only highlight the issues; their lack of compromise, their insistence they know best for everyone, and prioritizing "pretty" pictures over actual improvement. Course, rather than just observe, they feel an obligation to get involved and apply elbow grease, while still seeing everything around them in terms of poetry. The same way that a Page's brain hypes their own casual desires into virtuous tasks, a Knight's brain tries to enshrine everyone else's desires as the Knight's duty to fulfill; just as soul-crushing, but they're not about to let anyone see them cry. This results in huge miscommunications and resentment because **Knights are not psychic, and frequently not emotionally honest enough to learn (LET ALONE GUESS) what their friends want, or how they want it done, if at all.** A Knight speaks and demonstrates their aspect fine, but refuses to practice it in a way that benefits them in particular; with an ascetic focus on function, Knights **exploit** their aspect as a weapon - a hammer, in a world of too few nails. It's their take-it-or-leave-it problem solver, their code of honor, *your* utopia they build from their own blood, the ark to save you, the rules at their expense, the god they appease, the chain holding them down...and, often, it's the qualities they project onto other people, who somehow "deserve" it more.

Always similar parents. Have whatever happy conversation you want, they clam up when their folks are around - speak when spoken to, no acting out of line. Classpects are

trained into us; no matter how bizarre or disconnected from reality a Knight's compulsions seem, they were law at some point in their lives before. It helped them survive. Once.

Knights can and will do a lot of good, but they have to teach themselves how to do it without hurting themselves. It's hard for them to express affection as anything less than falling on their sword, and they'll have a hundred explanations for why the universe *somehow* requires them to suffer in order to function. Mind you, they're not always the victim; Knights can bring their pain with them, and struggle to force their surroundings into the battlefield they want to die in. It means seeing mundane friends as perfect hero leaders to follow with unquestioning devotion, helpless damsels to be protected, and tyrants who oppress them. They'll get mad because suggestions or casual requests are *felt* as do-or-die commands, and the Knight wants validation for their toil - and in the worst cases, *payment*. Just as likely the Knight won't say anything, continuing to willingly volunteer at chores and busywork because it's their "secret burden". If the emotional toll wears them down, if people disappoint (or just confuse) them, if their framework *shatters*, most throw in the towel. They can sulk and say they failed, try to start over with more damage, or they can become hatefully bitter at the entire concept of goodwill - life is nothing but broken promises to them now. Knights will put you on a pedestal, and it's alarming how much temper and desperation they'll display if you try to leave...and how much they want *you* to be mad if *they* threaten to leave.

If we're being entirely honest, Dave Strider's mental breakdown could've been a lot worse.

Prosperit Knights are not, strictly speaking, "laid-back". They may pretend to be, or openly mention they'd prefer to be, but their rules still have them in a vice. As inflexible as they are, they're the least likely to crack; they're content with their chosen level of stress, and their bluster or self-deprecation never completely overtakes their ability to have a rational discussion. This does mean that while they're the least likely to consciously recognize they have problems, they are the most likely to admit it - but again, not really looking for "solutions". Letting someone else take the lead is very natural for them (to the point they may not want to admit it), but they're not above backtalk and not immune to open disrespect, making them prone to a "backseat driver" kind of criticism. If they do snap, it's not as sudden; you can often see the gears turning as they talk, liable to mention when they're running out of patience for people (just not if you ask directly, then it's "fine" again, because that's the "correct" response). Letting all the rudeness out and deciding if they're going to burn a few bridges (or all of them) is bound to happen eventually. It might be a half measure where they're still unconsciously empathetic and respectful despite their words...and it might *not* be.

Karkat's tricky - even Hussie admitted his lifestyle in a hostile and totalitarian world really warped his perceptions, making his personality a bit of a deviation. Still, one has to admit that he is clear about how he feels about any given situation; no one said "fucking pissed" isn't a valid interpretation of Prospit honesty. Latula feels a more general example, and looking to media winds up with alot of *literal* sidekicks.

All of that aside, I'm pretty sure one of my uncles qualifies - but I won't say more. He's got his demons, and it wouldn't be fair to pretend I understand them, let alone glibly retell it all. Fairly certain he's Hopebound, but, while that makes for an accurate blueprint, there is always still more to a person; not that the flowcharts are wrong, just, that when you're living it, who cares what's a cliché or not?

Derse Knights will die for you when the cards are down, but will do alot to make sure you wouldn't expect them to. Their Knighthood is perceived in the grimmest lens of suffering and sacrifice, as they are but a worthless wretch to be sacrificed and forgotten about - but this is rarely spoken out loud. In a good 95% of situations, Derse Knights are an impenetrable wall of antagonistic jokes, deflections, and relentless "class clown" harassment. While this sadism often reflects legitimate irks and indignation, it also encourages the poor reputation they believe they deserve...or at least, it's *supposed* to. Derse Knights struggle to find a goldilocks zone of abuse - given and taken - which either shoves away friends who show patience, or wears them down trying to co-exist with the truly cruel. While humor can soften some of these blows, it also makes distinguishing touchy subjects a guessing game; sullen bitterness or explosions of temper can seem random, while Derse Knights act like it should have been obvious where their lines were drawn. These harsh constraints and contradictions have no pleasant destinations on their own, and it's unlikely for them to sustain relationships with people where they can perform their labour, avoid emotional honesty, and still function. If things get too "chummy", they're very likely to self-sabotage in dramatic ways, surgically trying to piss as many people off as possible, saying things that can't be taken back and breaking things that can't be repaired. There's pride in there, sure, but they're not hurting people because they're "no good": they're hurting people because they're terrified to be loved, and because their moral framework has no way to process them getting a hug. Of course there's alternatives to this road, but it's darkly seductive to burn bridges and solemnly move on to the next disaster.

You can point to this. Can point to Rocket Raccoon. Can point to Dave Strider. Fact is, Derse Knights are bleeding little jack-in-the-boxes of disaster until they finally want to be anything else. I don't know precisely what they want to hear, but it's probably best they think of something themselves - they have enough orders. And I do get it.

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March, march, march - through mud and rain, hell and high water, never slow never stop never scatter. Smile, sneer, scoff, anything but

scared; paint on a face that fools no one, say it's a statement and fool yourself. Knight in shineless armor, slayer of dragons and demons - or tool of the state, gutter of peasants, survivors destitute in the sum of land disputes. Not your flag, not your cause, but still your fight; and a hundred fights to come, 'till the armor rusts shut. Wouldn't that be a mercy, put out of your misery, relegated to maybes, not the sight you're meant to see. See it through soldier, strike fear from your silhouette...but shadows and shields and suits still aren't enough steel to steel yourself. It won't be rust that kills you - not battle or burden to break you - because there's nothing left to die. It's not chainmail, it's a coffin; it's not heroics, it's a headstone. Take the name of the horse on the board, and take the L with it - sick joke to snicker at, endure another at your expense. March and move on to the misery that misses you - and miss you're carrying it with you. Rust reflects ruin, steel blocks the light, Servant to the world too scared to live in it. Building, breaking, and building again - sucker forgot that a spiral is a circle. Orders obfuscate the Ouroboros, but any greater good shouldn't single out a sacrifice, and friends worth fighting for aren't asking for a footstool. It bridges are burnt, wood wasn't enough; if stone is stuck down, build it back with bricks. Scrub that steel, and you really will shine...but maybe, you already did.

...Oh take a fucking compliment.

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OUTLAWS

(REBELS, DOCTORS, CHEATS)

It takes a magic touch to bend the rules without leaving any mark, but desperation is it's own mistress. Twist a few rules, ignore the rest, but only enough for you and yours; to **steal** admits trespass, but who's to say the system doesn't have it coming? That principle can wait when people starve? That reform (perhaps not revolution, not yet) may need a touch of violence? Despite the names, "Greed" isn't really the driving force - it's "Envy". The world is simply full of too many nice things being doled out to those that don't appreciate it, and too many injustices dealt to those that deserved better. Of course that's subjective, but it always will be - for these two, that might be enough.

THIEVES know exactly who they are and who they want to be...or at least, the impression of both of those things, which may not hold up to either scrutiny or setbacks. Sly and snarky, they're difficult to ignore by design; always fighting the tide, defining themselves by their

deviations, their unique (or simply unappreciated) talents, and general disagreements. While bold as individuals, they are not truly independent: counterculture requires culture, and rebels require a status quo. Thieves are highly aware of their environment, expectations, and social dynamics, and may only find their voice when they find their audience. Crude and rude boasts of superiority are a cliché; however, while the schadenfreude of offending has its delights, Thieves are always looking to *impress* far more (even if they haven't realized it yet). No matter how much they stress to be an outsider, they keep "coincidentally" crossing paths, inviting friends to nights of troublemaking and debauchery, or swearing some pretty serious pacts of blood-bonds. They're the team's fixer, the dark horse, the secret weapon...and yes, they really just want you to pay attention to them and never leave, even if they struggle to do it in a way that isn't at least a little rude. Honestly, they're just cats.

To their credit, Thieves are really positive people, with a fearless (if contextual) confidence they're almost justified in advertising. They upset the delicate balance of Witches by identifying *as* someone who upsets delicate balances; just as much the free spirit with none of the discretion, a Thief **steals** their aspect in broad daylight. They're shrewd in justifying loopholes, exceptions, special treatment, and often attaching their signature (and self-worth) to the socially risqué...or, straight up something they don't deserve, belongs to someone else, and they've misunderstood the subtleties of. Losing a Witch's modesty also highlights the mechanism: keep your hands busy, keep your eyes on the prize, do not slow down. Witches always bounce back, but Thieves are playing with higher stakes: lows that bleed the spirit, and highs they'll fight to preserve. A Thief's aspect is not their pride, but what holds it together; their art that the world isn't ready for, their secret technique (weirdly proud of cheating), their illicit romances, their spirit animal, their gold medal in a competition that's killing them (still weirdly proud of cheating), their insistent catchphrases, the niche they won't share, what they won't apologize for, and the molotov that keeps them warm in a cold, cold world.

NICHE. I'm gonna' say it again - **NICHE**. Vriska's reign of terror has become too embellished, and diluted what genuine comparisons you can draw from her. Real Thieves (we can count Pre-Retcon Vriska) might get ahead of themselves and do damage, but there's limits, and being in the spotlight too long hurts their eyes even if they wanted to be there in the first place. That sense of unworthiness always kicks in and balances them out (eventually), and it's FUCKING WEIRD if you write a Thief without one - daddy issues, not a fucking god complex!

Let's not beat around the bush: Thieves are jerks. Sure, they might openly know this and embrace it, but they're guilty of far more than the occasional faux-pas. Impatience and sadism makes them

consistently rude to strangers, and marginally better to friends until they feel slighted. They develop grudges easily, only needing half a reason to swing and rarely thinking through potential fallout. A Witch may hinge too much on a concept of blamelessness, but a Thief finding comfort in *being* blamed is an unsustainable road; chronic obstinance can only be downplayed, excused, or “paid for” so many times, and Thieves tend to conclude these judgements without giving anyone else (i.e. the offended party) a say. What can make this turn ugly so often is that Thieves are unlikely to see themselves as the aggressor; concerned friends and “society” blur together, to someone who always felt backed into a corner, denied a fair start. This (sometimes justified) persecution complex is entangled with their defining compulsion to graft established abstractions to their own persona. The ideas of others simply feel more stable, more *complete*, compared to what bubbles from their psyche alone: an outsider, confined to the fringes, unfinished and unappreciated. The root of all Thieves, sadist or sanguine, is their pain: the mythologized and visceral tale of boots on their neck and dreams torn away from them. There is always something righteous in those “origin stories”, but Thieves can skip any lessons on empathizing and build a whole life around revenge, abusively passing on their trauma to others until everyone loses.

Vriska did alot of wrong things. She didn't have to, and using predestination as an excuse is more proof she's a jerk. I'm somewhat miffed Homestuck's self-declared “most important character” is so often forgiven of being a murdering bootlicker because “she had a rough childhood”, and “she did so much good too!”. I can't keep track of when or if Hussie changed their mind about her, and I don't care - in real life, people like that rarely get the boon of *saving the world* to offset their relentless bullshit, and I still got arguments for Spider8itch anyways! I advocate humility here, not just being a “benevolent” asshole.

Prosperit Thieves are likely to say that being an asshole is mostly okay so long as you have your reasons - and while they have plenty, they're often not very convincing. Sure, they have a clear sense of right and wrong, but will either have excuses for not doing the right thing or have some messed up methods to reach it. Their sense of being “cheated” by the world often goes unchecked; they are *always* the underdog, even if they've been on top for awhile. This lack of critical assessment leaves them chasing goals that distract more than repair, undertaking challenges often precisely because they're unqualified. While wounds are an open book to anyone who asks (but not up for criticism (or therapy)), it really doesn't seem to slow them down at all; trauma is reliable justification, like some kind of case-closed, “why are we still talking about this?” cause-and-effect. They're also frustratingly off the mark in confronting societal injustice; it's not that society must be uprooted for it's failures, but more that the system made a “mistake” in failing to accommodate their specific needs - they either want to be on top, or to get out. It's harder for them to

reconcile the disparity between their callousness and dependencies, making them more prone to write off transgressions, swept under the rug - or cut their losses altogether. If this all sounds like mental framing and not flavour, it's because Prospit Thieves actually vary quite a bit in that regard: cheerfully obnoxious to ruthlessly competitive, spitfire hero to spiteful loner, high-class vanity to rugged punk. Much like Prospit Witches before them, Prospit Thieves distance themselves from what their mask is hiding, but the higher stakes mean disillusionment borders on mental breakdowns. Life just isn't as simple as they want it to be, but stubbornly living as though it is only shoots them in the foot.

Sometimes it's hard writing nice things about Thieves because I keep thinking about Vriska, but there's a lot of "scoundrels with hearts of gold" both in fiction and in reality (I've known a few, but never that close). Understanding why they think what they do is important to challenge them - not that different from Witches, fittingly.

I have a few fiction suggestions, but it's hard to feel like any particular one is a bullseye. Still, I knew a bonafide Prospit Thief of Rage for a minute. We both played the same roleplaying MMO, and he liked playing this horny loudmouth who laughs at his own jokes. I knew the guy personally - the character wasn't far from the man himself, no sir. Such a patronizing attitude while he laughs off all the things that don't convince him, while stroking his ego about how deadly his wit and insults are. I wasn't impressed. Then again, I held a grudge long enough to write about it here...but, data is data, ain't it?

Derse Thieves are likely to say that being an asshole is completely okay if you have comedic timing - and while they have plenty, they also know better. Creatures of habit, they're unashamed of their worst qualities, insufferably proud of their best, and crystal clear in exactly half of what they want; the remaining half is far too embarrassing, even if it doesn't really make that much sense why they think that. The good side of this self-awareness is that they have a much better sense how their pain affects them, how far is too far, and their capacity for harm...and the bad side is that their pain is harder to ignore, they're prone to cross lines cause they *can*, and they may find validation in open cruelty by embellishing their nature from "misanthropic" to "nefarious". While this does make them much more dangerous friends, it also softens them in a peculiar way: if they're gonna' be evil, someone else oughta' be good. It's easier for them to stay on the fringes of groups and not over-involve themselves, easier for them to process differences of opinion, and it's easier to see when their bad habits aren't even making *themselves* feel better. If they trust someone enough to open up, there is raw sincerity in taking every word to heart, even if it's harder still for them to truly change. They might be an asshole, but they'll happily be *your* asshole.

More or less, anyways. You know, when I found a Vriska fan who claimed to be a Thief of Light on the Homestuck community Discord, I was skeptical, but the fucker really did line up top to bottom - if, yes, Derse and not Prospit. Definitely a chatterbox, but thankfully not so thin-skinned you couldn't point it out. We had a lot of good times and talks, but, they are more busy with work these days - or, maybe, other friends. Won't say it doesn't sting, but one of the benefits of systems like these is coming to peace with

people being who they are, and not needing to change them. Thieves be Thieves, and I'm always here if they want to swing around and shoot the shit.

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Hear the screams and shouting, ring the bells and loose the hounds. Face on the posters, lost in the crowd, whisper on the wind says "catch me if you can". Spit the name Thief, who delights in that spite, always one step ahead until they're not. So proud to be a public enemy, you'd forget we're all heroes of our story; victim of circumstance, too proud to cry, too stubborn to beg, when coffers ran dry. Before anything baroque, only bread; before anything brazen, something broken. Apologies attempted met catastrophe, so much for amicability, see it atrophy into apathy, no need to waste pity and cry "sad to see". Justifications are for the men who can afford it, cheaper and quicker to pilfer and floor it. In the absence, an abscess, romanticizing all the thrill of avarice; scorpion or viper, pick the fable that gives the bigger papercut. Revel in infamy till the revelation hits: you didn't walk back on the cycle of violence, just ran it in reverse. Parasite poisoned from the blood, punching past the point of aiming up, pain worse if you believe power was the point; scepters and crowns are only sticks and stones, and they won't feed your stomach or your soul. The real criminals are still tyrants, indifferent to the farmers that are nursed into vipers - hands cut and called snakes, but conspire, and let's see them fight a hydra. Every trick of the trade needs someone to teach it, and everything worth stealing deserves someone to share with. If justice is twisted, it takes a crook to fix it, 'cause if we weren't owed at least a fistful then why have hands at all?

Get even.

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ROGUES don't say much - either of substance, or at all. They're pretty easy to talk over, and may even encourage you to do so. They enjoy distractions, are pleasantly social in sharing those distractions with people they like, and evasive (perhaps guilty) towards those they don't. They're awkward, but they aren't really looking for people to take care of them; more realistically, they're hoping to take care of others, even if they're not entirely sure how to ask or when it would be appropriate. They are often isolated, insistent that anyone else is more qualified to help, or more entertaining to talk to. Stick around regardless, and they often default to loose advice: openly unsubstantiated, easily dismissed, bordering on platitudes. Past all this bashful indecision, Rogues are capable of some ferocious

optimism, finding solutions for entrenched problems and giving a platform to all unheard voices and desires. It's not too hard to see this ironclad resolve brewing beneath the surface - unless, of course, you are the Rogue in question, where it can all be weighed against every awful thing they've ever done, by intent or execution. The moments extreme enough to make it all manifest run the risk of scaring them away altogether, and that's assuming they don't scatter at the best of times just because they decided it was best for both of you...yet, is that sympathy of the penitent, or the fatigued resignation of someone too polite to admit they *prefer* to be alone? It's hard enough to convince people they deserve happiness, and it's harder still to follow your own advice.

"The best Homestuck character is Roxy, or you're wrong"

An Heir can reform laws all they want, but Rogues can't wait for the law to catch up (if ever) when there's good deeds that need doing; they **steal** their aspect on behalf of others, offering more daring solutions, more direct advice, and poaching/reclaiming what would've otherwise been wrapped up in tradition, beurocracy, guilt, anxiety, etc. What matters is people (certainly their favourites) being happy, and Rogues excel at subverting and loosening the grip of ideological chains. Course, while they're just about as steadfast as Heirs, they're not nearly as stable; too often they hesitate, hold their tongues, avoid making promises, and are unlikely to invoke a miracle on command or in public. They're as prone to rise to challenges and be there when people need them, but they keep at a reasonable distance if someone else has things covered. Even if they try to reach out and play therapist (or whatever else seems required), they're prone to flounder when overwhelmed by too many demands or for too long. Rogues require autonomy to do their best work, and being in the sidelines minimizes how many people and rules they have to argue with at one time; it's a big accomplishment to be someone they speak freely with, without the kid gloves. A Rogue's aspect is not to be underestimated: it's forgiveness to mistakes past and current, overdue happiness, stolen medicine, the simple pleasures that are easy to miss, a secret garden, technically-not-lying diplomacy, a peace worth fighting for, an injustice to correct, and a piece of their soul crafted to fill a spot in yours.

Unsurprisingly, Rogues also seem to come from households like Heirs, where something was definately missing (or hugely mishandled) and hurting everyone.

Unlike Heirs, they couldn't do anything about it.

Despite their worries, Rogues aren't really dangerous in alot of traditional ways; riches and fame rarely hold any allure when there's always someone (either personally or nebulously) who deserves it

more. Rather, the pervasive problems stem *from* the compassion; the guilt of saying nothing, the strain of making exceptions for every bleeding heart, and the further guilt of someone so capable of exceptions they're not sure they believe in anything at all. Rogues are much more Robin Hood than their paired class, but good intentions don't change that the verb is **steal**; there is an inherent manipulation in twisting someone else's headspace, both harder to ignore and justify compared to Heirs. "Comfort" is the objective, but Rogues struggle determining who should know what or believe what, deifying an "ideal self" of their friends that can only exist through their intervention to engineer it, or their vigilance in protecting it from outside influence. Like with all classes, it's easy to see how these assumptions of others reflects their language to interact with the world...but aiming any of that kindness inwards, for as comically obvious as that seems to be the right thing to do, is very difficult for Rogues. Their atrocious self-image calcifies, made worse from isolation and rarely trusting appeals; numbness in recognizing their own "hugs and excuses" approach, or resistance to anyone else's grubby hands trying to mold them. Whether as oddballs or outcasts, Rogues frequently invoke their aspect to weaken faith in their own words, further isolate from others, break important commitments, and blot out the hostilities and complexities of the real world...which is tragic, from someone with a gift in meeting those dangers head on.

You can lose a Rogue before they actually leave. Almost never a blowup, but, if you take them for granted for too long, if you offer too little back, their heart stops being in it even if their hands are still helping. They're not used to voicing their own thoughts, obviously, but they don't have to; most of the time, they just stop showing up someday. If they do talk to someone about it, it's clear they already made their mind up.

Prospit Rogues don't want you to worry about them, and all the reasons you might want to are not so much hidden as "thoroughly deprioritized" - it's not a big deal, it's handled, they've always managed, why would anything change now? They often hold a cheery exterior, though uneasily; an ambient lack of faith in their capability and sincerity, middling between defiant and defeatist with an awkward laugh at their own indecision. They carry themselves with a casual boldness, but often this is while safe and secure in their established boundries; they don't really stutter in their advice, but rather, rarely commit to pressure or severity. If that severity is brought upon them, they'll do their best to make it more manageable, but really they're more likely to find great solutions only because they weren't directly asked to give one. This isn't to say Prospit Rogues are entirely absent minded bystanders: they're just looking for the right *moment* to demand better for their friends and call out injustice, even if they haven't consciously recognized this proverbial coiled spring. Sure, they'll follow people who ask for help (within reason), but it's really *vibing* with do-or-die moments that kick them into high-gear that give

them form as a motherfucking *rebel*. Just as well, they can be pretty blunt when someone's exceeded their patience and crossed a line - not cruel, really, just firm. Prospit Rogues might never crack, but they're more than (perhaps even not) easy-going. If they don't know what they'll stand against, they're never going to figure out what they stand for - even if it's staring them in the face.

I've messed this one up more than I'd like. Lots of Prospit classes, with the right amount of polite awkwardness, can slip into the qualities I use to distinguish these Rogues, and I'm trying to improve in that area. If there's any true north to all this...well, I can never convince myself for sure on pop culture. But I know a handful personally, and one's probably the sweetest person I've ever met. Still, the right circumstances will give you a Rogue who never had time to play worrywart, and Prospit honesty brings out that "rugged survivalist" clearer than most. It's harder to account for that in my writing, but at the end of the day, you don't meet Rogues like that playing video games or volunteering.

You know Rufioh (Homestuck Rufioh, not...not Hook-Rufioh, obviously) is probably not a good role model for cheating on his girlfriend, but he's still so damn charming you almost forget. I'd peg Skylla from Friendsim as one, with the benefit of hindsight.

Derse Rogues are insistant in convincing everyone they aren't worth worrying over, to the point you might not realize they had problems at all. Compared to Prospits, Derse Rogues wear a more saturated mask of cheerful eccentricity, playing themselves up with antics that will stop on a dime if they think they went too far or drowned out someone else's voice. Noticably, they lack the Derse Heir staple of sporadic yet intense violence on their fellow man (I cannot stress this enough: PROBABLY had it coming). They definately think about it, either as a joke suggestion or personal grumbling, but (almost) always their resentments are vented at a safe distance or in a safe environment. Derse Rogues are predictibly more self-aware than their Prospit counterparts, weighed down by much more verbose self-loathing; all the reasons you shouldn't trust them, all the ways they've let others down, all insisted upon from someone who can't look away from their own reflection. They're far more meticulous and calculated if they *do* help, but too effective at convincing themselves that they shouldn't - that they don't have the right, or it wouldn't amount to anything. Any number of numbed resentments and resignations lie behind walls of goofy deflection, often with the guilt that these feelings exist at all. Even with all these caveats, Derse Rogues can find themselves making excuses for people they shouldn't, struggling to set boundries with individuals who might be less victim and more perpetrator - even to the Rogue in question. Hiding all these blemishes is intended to spare others pain...but maybe, it's also to avoid arguments, from someone who wouldn't know what to do if there *wasn't* a good explanation for all this self-sabotage. While it's all more neurotic than Prospits, Derse Rogues just plain want to help people - the true difference is that it's more likely to involve slapping them in the face first.

Nepeta deserved better. I'll fucking cut anyone who says otherwise.

Anyways, I know a handful in this department as well. One of my best friends is a Rogue of Rage, and I'm still touched for the fiery compassion she showed me, on the dignity I was owed in bad situations. Another one is Mindbound, and I've gone over spotting that aspect - if nothing else, she agreed with what I wrote, and I did tinker it a little based on her stories. The last one I'm genuinely pretty close with, hanging out almost every day, and *she's a frickin' Derse Rogue of Void*. Girl's a goddamn ditto for Homestuck's Roxy made flesh, in so many big and small ways. Sure, sure, she's her own person, but *damn* if I don't love seeing this blueprint prove itself so vividly.

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Flicker in the light frets to disturb the candle, filch on the loose but only to borrow back. Vigilante to a hundred vengeancees but last of all their own, masked to be modest as much as anonymous - Rogue by trade, nobody by name. Privy to the prayers of peasants pillaged by the privileged; sure they'd prefer a paragon, but the punk bothered to show up, so pardon the comparison. Sickness and starvation is sanctioned by the state, nobility sheltered behind freshly stained red tape; better men squared up and got struck down, so muster half their courage and it'll be enough to skulk. Pragmatist spinning plates, but can't always keep food on them; play pretend it's a feast, and pretend a little harder they'll make it through the night. Redistribute sins of industry, what silk and satin might better be, gifting sweaters made of luxury - toughest fetters made of sympathy. Your people in the gutters but you on the rooftops, close enough to hear their cries, but you still slept through some of them. So much desperation, and you swore intervention, didn't admit only at your discretion, can't live with the resignations. Someone always starves or freezes, withered and bitter at the liar who promised better; if you suffer for all their sakes, you'll be your own sucker. Too tired to hit castles, too weak to haul gold, too scared to dare say someone asks too much; the loudest voices care little for the quietest. Give up all you have and lose your morals with it, to the ones who want a patsy more than a paragon...but you aren't either, are you? Pick your head up Rogue, and your weapon with it. You're a criminal, and your only crime is loving too much - enough to lie, cheat, and kill. Spurn the kingpins who want a fixer, and spare the citizens too scared of the price of their own happiness. Find the friends who can follow you to that rooftop, the ones you never had to hide from...and wreak bloody recompense on a world that won't see you coming.

You're tougher than you think.

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FAE

(ZEALOTS, INNOVATORS, AUTOMATONS)

Serving an aspect has limits - not as much as just “knowing” the damn thing, but *still*. Trying to colour inside the lines of your own imagination can sound silly, when more faith inspires more dedication to push through problems that previously seemed insurmountable; to **create** beliefs where there was no precedent (or permission), heart pumping red hot with blood wrought from a stone. While this improvisation might suggest autonomy, it isn’t (except it is): Fae are bound tighter to their aspect, which has always been less “Infallible divine platonic ideal” and more “memetic paintjob over hunches and superstition”. They’re problem solvers, but beating what *seemed* impossible sorta proves it wasn’t in the first place, don’t it? When **exploiting** is a background process, it becomes as imprecise as Servants are to **knowing**; without taking stock of all the options available, without even knowing what they’re *talking* about, the Fae charge forward with a reckless charisma. “More” doesn’t always mean “better”...at least, not as it pertains to mere *human* sensibilities,

Kinda stumped on words, personally. I mean Hussie went with “european medieval”, but it is fun (and sometimes, beneficial) to translate that into other cultures and work through the would-be platonic ideals of it all. I mean his symbolism was all manner of “mystical creatures”; elves, fairies (godmothers too), but you could stretch that to general spirits, demons, or even youkai if you’re feeling weeb-y. In the most modern context, I guess “Cryptid” lands right. It’s up to you if that feels too broad.

MAIDS are intimidating, relentless, and the *very archetypal definition* of a workaholic. Professionally, they’re drawn to juggle twice as many plates as anyone would think is reasonable, treating their career and hobbies with equal levels of dedication, charging through life’s obstacles as a sacchrine bulldozer. Personally, they prefer to be known professionally; pry past the track record, and it’s all odd hunches, chronic distractibility, laughing at jokes that no one else is laughing at or were never meant as jokes. Maids have a rather volatile sense of self-importance, but the focus is on service and not glory; sparing acknowledgement and affirmation is all they need, even if that might be the only thread keeping them reliable and not narcissistic. Of course, this is intertwined with a doubt in others competency, leaving Maids to push past their own friends in the name of doing everything themselves - even socially, there is a casual cruelty in their low expectations. Maids always have a plan; if they don’t, they make one; if you give them one, they fix it; if you fight them, they do what they wanted to do anyways. They do this all alone, both from a “too many cooks” principle, and the lucid fact that this workload would be entirely unfair to burden others with. They do what needs doing, without flinching and without protest - even if, for their sake as much as everyone else’s, they sometimes really should.

If you're thinking about career women in movies who end the film giving up on that promotion so they can spend more time with their kids or go on a vacation, you can skip this entry entirely because you already understand who I'm talking about.

You know, maybe I'm just supremely unlucky, but I've befriended *zero* Maids in my years gaming on the internet. I only really got to play anything with a pal I met in high school, and that was when I could convince her to; she was always busy with something more explicitly constructive. Still, I've met lots in my time volunteering, and even got a guess for the lady in charge of Railtown's best cafe. Maids are tough motherfuckers, and you meet the good ones where good work needs doing - hence the name, I suppose, even if I do have my reservations on how submissive it sounds.

Maids are generous and probably(?) incorruptible, but the way they help people is based on principles and assumptions left unchecked. They're bound to the same gut-morality as Pages, with a brain hyped up on representing virtue and, if not *less* doubt and unworthiness, then certainly a more proactive response. What takes Pages years to carefully muster the courage to attempt, Maids chase without hesitation; the idealized image of "who they're supposed to be" is maintained more often than not, but the risk of slipping and falling into existential ennui keeps them permanently pushing to secure this high. Maids edge on the brink of solipsism without falling in, open to new ideas and suggestions *just enough* to argue with it; it's not going to be a *fair* argument, but it gives them the bare minimum of self-awareness to navigate reality and break the limits of what some idiot thought was possible. Trusting in more than they see, a Maid **creates** their aspect; they power through protest, "correcting" the world into the utopia they already expected to be there. More than confidence, the nature of *what* a Maid is creating differentiates them from Pages: over-saturated and singular, bold statements and rash action, no charm to compromise, harmony overrated. A Maid is the living embodiment of their aspect: it's their blood, their flesh, their doctrine, their only acceptable results, their true north, their reserves of gumption, their most harmful compulsions, their wildest stabs in the dark, the follow-up stab to make sure even after you screamed "don't stab me", and the fantasies they breathe as facts that either are or *goddamn should be*.

This is a wild concept, but if you put unimaginable amounts of pressure on a child and only validate them when they "succeed", you're likely to get a Maid...or, you know, a Page, and there does seem to be that AFAB/AMAB split. It's pretty depressing; living as yourself, for someone else. It's hard to take the reigns back of your life, even when all you do is pull the cart. The thing is, if you don't also realize how heavy it is, you're less likely to protest...

The lack of cowardice is an improvement from Pages, the lack of teamwork more questionable, but it's the lack of *hesitation* that is the problem. Without the guilt and disassociation/rejection, Maids not only fail to notice when their instincts have pushed them to a bad idea, but may not actually *care*; in ignoring compromise or intervention from the very people they're supposedly helping, they loop back around to the selfless arrogance of Mages. Looking for

answers in a bubble, they can turn conspiratorial, impulsively accusing others (or, more frequently, themselves) on weak threads. This is to say nothing of being able to romanticize and justify intricate plans of revenge and humiliation, intertwining universal principle and personal spite within moments. They can be slowed down and brought to the drawing board, but you have to have their *utmost* respect to do so, and there's still no guarantee they'll stay. Beyond diplomatic hiccups, eternally plagued by the mantra "If you want something done right, do it yourself" is as taxing as it sounds. While stuffing down weakness for potentially *years* is all very impressive, breakdowns are inevitable, followed by a resolve that this is their mess to clean up. Look, Maids "overwrite reality" and "push past the limits of what's possible" as metaphors - in truth, they're just human beings. They're not literally maids (usually), and not literally powerful magic creatures either (...*usually*). Maids do know who they are if they slow down, they do *get* there's a world outside this idea of "who they have to be", but it's confusing compared to their comforts - a job well done is a dopamine hit, after all. They work alone, and they do indeed work wonders, but they don't have to live for their work. Most Maids accept only half of this advice, claiming to have recovered from a spiral and feel totally refreshed; it's up to the friends around them to insist they need a month's vacation, and not a weekend.

"Had to be me; someone else might've gotten it wrong." It's a good line for Mages, Pages, Maids, and the last rung on the ladder we'll get to. I think Maids truly do encapsulate the purity of that belief more than anyone else, but that doesn't mean it's right; they highlight the strengths and limitations both, and are so stable they live with it.

Prospit Maids are ruled by the singular law that they can do anything they put their minds to. Cheery and upbeat, able to conquer any challenge with a smile - or at least, utterly convinced they *should*. They set out to be perfect workers, supportive friends, interesting hobbyists, and ideal citizens. While well-mannered or even sweet, they're still impatient and competitive with others; differences of opinion or plans going off-the-rails often finds them confused that was even a possibility, leaving them doubling-down with failure not being an option. This forward-momentum ultimately obscures their own moments of selfishness, and an inarguable brick wall is very likely to cause them to crack. Even then, keeping that smile on will mean pulling a few excuses out of their ass, and they don't have to be good ones if they only have to convince themselves. Prospit Maids are generally slow to realize how different of a wavelength they're on, but the lessons they learn is usually "trust people less, trust myself more". They have uncanny talent in their chosen career path, but being "less-than-perfect" and being "a failure" are too often treated as the same thing - definately still Pagey, but they haven't got time to weep when they can bleed.

I understand the *idea* of having Jane go evil tyrant, but I still feel like I missed something there. Or, they did.

Derse Maids are ruled by the singular law that human beings will dissappoint them. They're far more objective focused, always keeping politeness and mental health as tertiary priorities compared to their career or art; if you don't agree with it, or think it's a waste of their talent, they'll do it *more*. This diligence surprisingly seems spurned by their increased self-awareness, where the most natural response to recognition is to resign themselves to ruin - a lifetime of pushing boulders up hills, where a slip means being squished. Mind you, this is rarely any kind of acrimony; Derse Maids are very content - even unsettlingly cheery - so long as no one fucks with their groove. With a good sense of humor and (negotiable) professionalism, it can be unexpected when they display true ruthlessness or a masochistic delight in thrill-seeking - there's violence in there, never entirely a joke. It's difficult to tell where the lines are and when they've already been crossed, meaning they'll probably only voice their truest frustrations at you all at once, unexpectedly, possibly minutes after (or even *before*) trying to fix your problem. When they finally burn out, there's a strong pull to keep going anyways, gleefully indignant to the stakes (and concerned friends). Like all Maids, Derse ones cannot do everything themselves - but, they are more likely to give you reason to keep your distance in the first place, whatever those reasons might be.

One of my best friends in the world. Sometimes, she gets pissed off and doesn't speak to me for a couple months. I accept it, and so does she. Someday she might not, but, fingers crossed I suppose.

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Rustles and shadows past the treeline and out of mind, almost; burdened by what goes bump in the night, backed up by grandmother's grim fables. Paranoia cannot parse folklore and fact, but stoke a fire to blot out it's better off not knowing. So come, ye curious or ignorant; come cold iron and crosses. Traipse a border brokered on the bodies of those bold enough to tresspass, and bear witness: bark and bone, sap and sinew, catalyst cryptid of the cryptic convicted to conviction, contemplating what to do with you. Made more than mortality's thin definition, made servant to ancient court's demonstration, maiden pure only to their delineation. Warrior and worshipper and architect above all; mystic metals, stone, and trees, weaved and wrought into monuments just as strange. Let the Hallow decide what's garrison or garden, or both or neither; Maid sanctified and sanctioned in dutiful confusion, always "how?" and never "why?" - but what's stopping you? Parse the inspiration from the inconsistant,

that the mythic might've missed it: grim fables of children stolen in the night, heard, told, and lived. The ape redirected against itself, mutated into miracle worker, muddle the lines between factions and infections - and left in it, you. The creator is creation, caught in a loop to forget you're not a cog, but if you're done holding yourself back then ask: what defines "more"? The woods are your playground, but thin definition of home - so make it one, rule the fae, or burn it down and start again or don't. Traipse a border they all said was one-way and introduce yourself to people you don't belong to anymore - but could, if they can keep up. Mix metals into alloys, break bread into alliances, weave meat into hybrids bred past both of your mistakes...or don't, or do, or a little or a lot, or something strange and dangerous and new - and definitively, inalienably, you.

You're a human being with needs, and a force of nature. Own it.

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SYLPHS live for other people - they're unyieldingly optimistic, supportive to a fault, and treat "friendship" as a professional and formal contract. Productive and altruistic in equal measure, Sylphs preach black and white (mostly white) universal morality, always with an explanation or accomodation for when it contrasts reality. While more than a little snippy to slights, their default worldview is so gosh darned optimistic that they'll have a smile plastered on their face a majority of the time regardless. Despite this high energy, most remain on the backline, alternating between proxy enthusiasm or putting the "passive" back in "passive-aggressive". Don't get me wrong, they're duty bound to provide some insane support that would be unthinkable to outright ask someone, but Sylphs get carried away far too easily; terrible with boundaries, personal space, and anything less than a hard "no". One shouldn't be reckless in encouraging them to get out of the bleachers or to take their wildest ideas at face value; not until they find a way to reconcile an alarming amount of personal uncertainty with who they are, and what will make them happy. Sylphs are the lynchpins in any friend group - or only convinced they are, and dangerous in what they've decided that entails.

"I don't feel like I can be friends with someone without helping them."

Sylphs live for other people - or rather, tend to believe that, despite being a sentient human with wants and needs. The currents of their aspect are strong enough that there is a temptation to believe it will harmonize the world no matter what...but they're *just barely* not fully

convinced it'll happen without them reminding everyone and staying on guard. Sylphs over-involve themselves even more than Knights, but pull the same trick as Page-Maid in being able to **create** ways out of fail-states; fudge the numbers, never say die, and rewrite the rules whenever they get in *anyone's* way. While this adaptability makes them less obviously (or, outwardly) contentious than Knights, they aren't actually adapting their aspect; failure is not an option, and if their friends aren't "succeeding" (**A VERY SUBJECTIVE CONCEPT**), then something *must* be wrong with the script. This makes Sylphs hardwired to brainstorm solutions to problems that never looked like they had solutions, but terrible at noticing when only they decided it was a problem. Their aspect is their service to humanity, their contractual obligations, the life calendar they plan for everyone else, their most passionate lectures, the fun ways they'd "upgrade" their friends, and the ways they nurture others in a way they want to be appreciated...even though they're shy, or defensive towards the idea of (explicit) reciprocation.

My mother is in her 60's, and has been loud (very, very loud) about the wonders therapy has done for her; apparently, up until now, she hasn't realized how traumatic her childhood actually was, despite the facts remaining "constant screaming and beatings". I asked a Sylph I know (a very close friend, mind you) what their childhood was like. They responded, in complete sincerity, with an uneasy "I don't know".

I'm a bit concerned.

Sylphs live for other people - and sometimes, that means pinching someone's cheek and hijacking their life completely. Their dopamine rush is locked behind people saying "This isn't actually a big deal" or "I didn't ask for help", and Sylphs will often *fight you* to get that hit. With more stable smiles and more contentment in their (percieved) marginalized place in the universe, Sylphs lack the reliable explosions Knights exhibit - but when they *do*, they're playing with twice the gunpowder. Every problem a Sylph percieves is their responsibility, and their creative optimism means anyone not accepting their encouragement must just hate being happy. Sylphs grumble more than Knights, but don't "snap" the same way - they don't burn bridges to isolate, they burn bridges to trap you with them. The helper instinct never stops, and the idea there's just the *tiniest* motive of pride, resentment, or helplessness seems difficult for them to notice; depression and desperation are old friends, always something under control, always something they could work around. Remember that this is a brain that's decided it's their job to have all the answers, and failing that job isn't the problem: the problem is that they don't know who they are if they *don't*, especially since acting out like this is usually spurned by sharp setbacks, humiliation, wakeup calls, and other bad news. The world is always so close to perfect in their eyes,

but closing that gap is impossible - and not going to fix what's twisted up anyways.

I find it fascinating how utterly indistinguishable Sylphs are from the role of "mother" - culturally, anyways. It's just seen as a sort of default, and it's hard to tell if that's the healthiest position for the genuine articles and those under them. Given I know a male-identifying Sylph (fairy godfather?), it's not just a questionable ideal, but sometimes not even an option. Granted, I've noticed a few in the social worker business...

Prospit Sylphs have the most stability in being a good friend and generous provider. They support everyone, give lots of second chances when they shouldn't, and only ask that everyone is civil. If they do overstep, however, they also have the biggest blindspot: "do right for right's sake", sure, but they can't *stop* doing right. Sometimes they'll toil making gifts or gestures for people who either don't want it (or didn't appreciate it the "correct way"), and sometimes they just can't let go of their particular status quo. They simply don't moderate their expectations, and the world will dissappoint. At worst, they'll frame selfishness as the assumed world order, trying to push people to be only the hyper-exaggerated image in their head, cruel at anything they interpret as "unpleasant", and failing to understand how authoritative they've become - the fact that they're arguing against their friend's actual words doesn't seem to register. Don't let this distract from the fact that they will accomplish a lot of good by not giving up on people and trying to help them succeed...they just shouldn't be *complacent* in that, and assume that any good (or harm) they do is cosmically permitted - let alone ordained.

Hi mom.

Derse Sylphs intertwine "I'll die for my friends :)" and "I'll cut anyone who fucks with me :)" in the same philosophy, and occasionally in the same sentence. They're exactly as aggressively helpful as any Sylph, but no stranger to the "aggression" part; if the world needs omlettes, that means no hesitation in breaking eggs. Unfortunately, given that eggs are people, they run into the familiar Derse issue where being aware of your problems is not the same as fixing them. Stern, stressed, and aware of their pride, this breed of Sylph is still capable of presenting as the backline beck-and-call in a way that's hard to differentiate from Prospits; they're a touch more openly self-deprecating, and a few notches more fond of sassy zingers. They truly differentiate themselves when they get invested in a project, thriving on forward momentum with a touch of chaos; at home in the eye of the storm, but with an outside impression of "crazy mad scientist". While twice as venomous in insults, Derse Sylphs are more outwardly uncomfortable with total authority, unlikely to assume and prone to cracking when "left in charge". The

contrasts of helpless sychophant, proxy parasite, over-protective parent, and wild god-complex are plainly visible even to them, and it's all as terrifying as it is exciting. They're the most in need of encouragement to get out there and strut their stuff, but it's still important to make sure they don't get in too much trouble.

I always felt Pearl from Steven Universe was a fair example. She might be infamously "salty", but her devotion and belief is genuine, as much a boon as it is a bond. Creature of habit, and likely Hopebound. On that note, I actually met a Derse Sylph of Hope once. It...it went poorly.

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ROYALS

(JUDGES, SKEPTICS, SPOILSPORTS)

You keep pushing and pulling, something just might snap. Even if you want to steal it, you can't admit it - or won't notice, in all the upheaval. It all gets caught up in words and misdirection, because these two revel in complications. Their aspect is brittle, and corrosive to what's around it; whether they want to or not, they will end up **destroying** it, and destroy far more with what they *don't*. What values it has must survive doubt and dissection, and anything left (or hidden) will be valued over anything else. We have upped the stakes from rebels resisting society, to society resisting the mystical unknown. Neither was ever going to win, but it is the politics and power of royalty that drag everyone else into their fight - their burden is to know what's best for you.

Deciding how much praise, dismissal, or warning to attribute to any class is, in the end, subjective; we are all capable of good and evil, both petty and glorious, however we define any of it. For how I define it though, and in a way I will make my case for...well, I go harsher on this one. They're not write offs, but I'm not here to be delicate.

PRINCES (or princesses) are...*complicated*. Most would likely describe themselves as "shy", or "people-pleasers" on the inside, but that can be a stark contrast to what they actually *do*. Princes take charge readily, confront what they see as injustice, make their moral disagreements well known, and struggle to articulate and live by a perfect philosophy. Even if they're reluctant to reach out, they pride themselves on being there for the people they care about - but "pride" is the operative word. High personal standards and good intentions can blur into dangerous compromises, and a slew of rationalizations to avoid apologies. It is disingenuous to say Princes aren't ones to look out for, despite a capability to be loyal friends and strategists. They

frequently reinvent themselves, constructing a persona, reputation, and guidelines that ensure they are both the resident advisor and some definition of “cool”; however, doubt and self-loathing will decompose this mask, making them an emotional burden with increasingly erratic and drastic decisions. At the breaking point, another baptism; not so much an apology as a “don’t worry”, a new “clean slate”, and perhaps a new address or social circle...yet, no matter how segmented a Prince’s life looks, they really don’t change much. They’re just defensive dorks who try to pretend they don’t care, while rationalizing the bitter isolation their constant complaining earns them as “the price of being smart”. Again, Princes are complicated, but the real problem is that they keep trying to make everything around them equally complicated - especially when it isn’t.

I might still have a few Princes here. It’s unlikely, but, maybe you think “Hey this is starting to sound like me, though it’s harsh”. You’re probably about to be pissed at the stuff I say next though, so, I guess most of this is for other people going “pff, yeah this is totally steve” and I’m sorry Steve but it’s a fact of life that Princes hate being called Princes. It sounds like a catch-22, but that’s only if you value your opinion more than everyone else you know...which you might try to justify one way or another here. Something to work on, right? Maybe? Come on Steve, work with me.

Princes do not take well to other people trying to “sum them up” - which is a great way to sum them up. While they (usually) avoid the caustic swagger of Thieves, the fundamentals remain: chipped shoulders, self-reliance, eager-to-please yet reluctant-to-trust. The ideals of a Thief become high enough that openly self-serving behavior becomes difficult to justify to themselves as much as others; the whole aspect feels “off”, and trying to find their place within it can take a lifetime. It is not enough to be a fixer or an “in-the-know” showoff, but these higher ambitions and expectations don’t lead to motivation as often as they lead to defeatist misanthropy. In the case of the former, a Prince **destroys** *through* their aspect, as a revolutionary iconoclast boldly proclaiming their ideas “**THAT THE MEDIA WON’T TELL YOU ABOUT**”. In the case of the latter (much more common), a Prince **destroys** the aspect itself, trying to deromanticize its allure and disentangle it from their identity. This obsession with having all the answers of How Things Should Be Done has numerous cracks, most of which stem from still being Thieves^{^2}. Princes are inherently contrarians, thriving on (and/or paranoid of) persecution, with their truest passions (and motive) still buried in the aspect they keep loudly complaining about. Authority masks awkwardness, but both conceal accountability, strangling a Prince’s incentive and ability to self-reflect. A Prince’s aspect is an academia that vexes them, the contraband they relieve you of, an endangered beauty, a fragile peace, an embarrassing hope, the lover that rejected them, a sickness they recklessly amputate, a nightmare no one else shares, and the crown of thorns they don’t know themselves without.

Dirk Strider literally “raised himself”, which is kind of amusing to imagine for an infant in an isolated apartment. However, it *is* apt in how Princes describe their upbringings, which resemble far more the hostility Eridan experienced. Usually. Like a good 80% of the time. If not parents, I do know a Prince (who’s always been rather well adjusted) who says he adopted this way of thinking purely through his own autonomy. It’s odd to think about, and I know they get all futzy when they get examined, but damn if there’s not something TO all this...

The unfortunate truth is, Princes can do an alarming amount of damage to the people around them despite good intentions; an impulse to find problems will, when overextended, create them. They can be too involved in other’s affairs while being unsolicited or simply unsuited, and not notice their overprotective nature creating unhealthy power dynamics. Without being able to own up to their spite like Thieves, Princes often belittle and undermine others alongside (or in lieu of) supportive concern, unconsciously(?) gravitating to those that endure it. They are often confrontational and argumentative, protective of their dignity often as much *if not more* than their friends - and often, *to* those friends. Provide enough pressure and they often default to a familiar argument of “Everyone is twisting my words, out to get me!”. The worse this gets, the more likely Princes will start rejecting their aspect wholesale as a corrupting influence that only they can see through; conveniently (and hypocritically), the sum of this often results in an interpretation of their values that *only* benefits themselves. Abuse and manipulation at this point is rationalized as an immutable fact of their nature or life; trying to console them rarely reaps results, as does reprimanding them that the damage they’ve done is *still somehow worse than what they’re willing to admit*. Beyond the speeches, there’s just someone who cracked trying to do everything themselves, and felt stupid for trying in the first place. It is difficult to negotiate with someone who may prefer to turn their life into a trainwreck rather than accept a hug...but, one of the most important facets of dealing with Princes is reminding oneself that you never needed their singular approval in the first place.

“And now I feel my calling is to break apart and fall to pieces; better yet, invent a brand new method of ascension.”

“So here I am, respectfully and royally destroying any chance of getting back on your good [graces].”

“So what? Did you want me to say sorry?
Should I apologize when you ignore me?
Didn’t ask to be right or to be lonely.
Or to be hatched into an ugly story.”

- “Ugly Story” by PhemieC, 2013 (i think)

Prospit Princes are peacekeepers, but only to their definition of “peace”. They cultivate a reputation for being sturdy, loyal, and trustworthy, while not shy about particular merits they’ve earned or

skills they've practiced. The creation of their philosophy and rules to life is slow, cautious, and deliberate - the execution and extolling however, is casual, even reckless. They're emotionally transparent, and trying to look confident is an act of politeness and not deception. This transparency extends to what they take issue with: Prospit Princes do not hesitate to speak their mind on moral disagreements, (perceived) offences to them or those around them, or just general "bad vibes". They're matter-of-fact in having exhausted their aspect of all remaining value, but that's often rather little, and pushing them to try again (or doing it better yourself) hits their biggest sore spot. They're frequently blindsided by how intense and overprotective they come off, but mistrust alternatives to their instincts. If people reject their oversight, they're likely to assume that's someone else's fault for "not getting it", and these arguments can make them more hassle than help. There is an implicit (or explicit) expectation of respect for protections past and present, quick to blame others while priding themselves on being the first to forgive. These schisms of perception can be mended, to learn both what their friends want and what *they* want...or, devolve into an echo chamber of bitterness and sacrifice, while the Prospit Prince learns who will or won't prove "unreasonable". The worst of their manipulations and distorted reality are guided by "intuition"; if a Prospit Prince truly has abandoned their principles, they are the last to know, and the very last to admit it.

I had a long, long history with a certain friend. He always called it a "scientist impulse", which was as wrong as when Eridan did it. Everybody's big brother - and he'll snarl at you if you contest it. His behavior is perfectly encapsulated in characters of Homestuck's extended material, to the usual eerie degree these things are...I doubt he'd be happy about that. Doubt he'd accept it. All I can really do is prove his defenses unnecessary, and see where things go from there. At least others can recognize it.

Zebruh, pretty sure. Cole Phelps, maybe. Saltzpyre, endearingly. Chuck McGill, 100%.

Derse Princes are the most deliberately obfuscative people you'll ever meet: an eternal engine of disparate reinvention and self-sabotage, masked by any number of excuses besides the somewhat obvious truth - insecurity. They reliably "start" as teenage supervillains with too much to prove (and transparently high opinions of themselves). This evolves into a superposition of shifting masks: eager and loyal friends with surprising honesty about their fears, burdened protectors making the hard decisions, suave yet casual charmers looking to do good without straining themselves, sarcastic sadists happy to dissappoint others with "how the world really works", or a martyring "born-broken" monster who ruins everything and everyone around them. While Prospits dip into all these pools, it's Derse Princes who lose sight of their own truth and extend past their own limits; too cruel to loved ones, they crack into devotion begging requital; too desperate to prove their "magnificent" individuality, they crack into a helpless "victim of circumstance" begging forgiveness. Among all

these things, they are *still* their aspect despite themselves, often preferring to preach “nihilistic freedom” rather than the passions they find too embarrassing to dare admit. Of course, that “freedom” pits them against everything and everyone around them, too obvious in what they’re scared to lose. While many stay on the sidelines (and may prefer it that way), even contextual authority tempts the worst: an aura of smug superiority that never truly hides the desperate hysteria, trying to frantically overwhelm competing voices with personal attacks and gross humiliation. It can only fall back as “constructive criticism” so many times, and falling back further to “I’m actually the victim” should **never** forgive abuse. Ultimately, this “tragic and failed protector” is one more mask from someone who doesn’t want to be hurt anymore...but it is the hardest to take off.

I am nothing close to unbiased on this one. I’ve known some eggs.

It’s funny how much the “tortured genius, too smart to be happy” archetype gets passed around. Cause like, they’re almost all Derse Princes, but it’s a very specific instance that doesn’t reflect the whole. You can look at Dr. House and Rick Sanchez and go “Hope and Life”, but they’re still exaggerated in how far they go and how much the world facilitates their particular egos. It’s Bojack Horseman that stands out to me, because the swath of flashbacks, progression, regression, small moments, big moments, conclusions by himself and by the people around him, that’s like the ENTIRE JOURNEY of a Derse Prince (of Light, specifically). Frankly if you watch the whole show, it’s a better crash course than I could ever do.

That, or the Pesterquest Dirk Strider route. Hearing nervous “definitely a knight of heart shut up” young Dirk interact next to “looks like he would have a mental breakdown if he lost an argument” bad-timeline adult Dirk is a good display of how even Homestuck’s own definition of Prince accounts for the spectrum of reinvention - despite it always, eventually, boiling down to the same question:

>Trust your friends

>Trust yourself

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Complicated compromises, juxtaposed fragments; politician and paragon, penultimate in parallel. Heartfelt pleas and heroic battles, transcribed by the masses as lectures and posturing from the would-be, the runner-up, the “almost” all-you-want-to-be. Prisoner to silk and satin, suffering from success, misunderstood misanthrope. No one can see you eye to eye; you watch over the people you love, and they feel looked down upon. You can’t settle, you won’t; you won’t let anyone. Sole skeptic to superstition, you scrutinize and subdue sorcery; smelt it down and sift through the slag to see what survives. Science called sin or just superfluous, the ignorant and illiterate iterate - it irritates. A Prince owes their people, and all interrogations of the imperial inquisition that make war to folklore are necessary - yet, flirting with demotion, to be disavowed by dissent. Why then? The motive? Protection by the wary? No, more simple; beneath spite and sneer is the spurned and scarred, unable to trust what could not be tamed,

seeking some veneer of victory in vindictive violence while welding and wielding weapons of all viscera violated. An usurper, so be it, it's what they always expected - or just you? All that initiative, no imagination; who are you besides your birthright and burden? A Destroyer, only? To your hundred excuses, one retort: "***can't***, or ***won't***?" You could be a good man, so long as you stop trying to be the greatest. You could be a heroic savior, if you stopped worrying who will notice. You could be a good King, but only when you stop wanting it, let alone thinking you ever had to be.

Don't break the world, break the cycle.

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BARDS fancy themselves philosophers, threading a paradoxical needle between not being as smart as they think they are, and still being smarter than they let on. There's an oft-spoken pride in being a free spirit and thinker, which mirrors the contrarian authority of Princes. However, rather than insecurity, it's oversecurity: Bards are lackadasical skeptics, refuting expectations and obligations (especially those placed upon them) so that the good times can roll. They are surprisingly diligent at certain careers, skills, or hobbies, but you can't really ask them for *practical* help; they'll catch you only after they spent 20 minutes deciding you are, indeed, falling. Bards instead prefer the merits of collectively discussing underdeveloped visions of ideal societies and ideal people, while not in a hurry to make good on that (at least, on any kind of scale). On rare occasions, Bards will actually follow through; they'll lead group efforts, buy expensive gifts, say something truly profound, or scream that the injustices of the world have gone on too long and it is now time for a new age...which doesn't (usually) go anywhere. Bards are known less for these extremes, and more their loose therapy, with a detachment to issues that lets them approach things calmer and more careful than those too invested, finding useful perspectives from unexpected and untapped places. Bards love being underestimated, and can be disarming despite themselves, ready to engineer (or blindly take credit for) the realizations you never expected to have. The comedy, easygoing nature, and distractibility of Bards is ultimately as much distraction from their intelligence as it is the method of it.

If you're thinking of the common "wise stoner" archetype, you're on point. Bards act like that sober however, despite their propensity to seek out substances. To that end, there aren't a lot of fictional examples in starring roles, but you'd get the point across fine by pointing to the Dude of "The Big Lebowski" and calling it a day there.

Bards might love their mystique, but they really are just Rogues^{^2}. Disagreeing with the lifestyles of others is done without hesitation, downplaying ones sincerity with levity evolves into outright clownmanship, and difficulty articulating oneself turns into reveling in misdirection. Sure, there's bashfulness and appeals to alternatives, but Bards ramble under pressure instead of retreat, and these insistant pushes on sensitive topics come off as less "heartfelt imploring" and more "arrogant curiosity" (even though there *is* always compassion at its root). The crisis-response impulse is in there, but where a Rogue flirts with drastic solutions, a Bard dances around impossible revolutions; always talking about what they *could* do, but only doing anything after everyone assumed it was all talk. Bards weaken the grip of beliefs in reckless curiosity, trying to free their friends of shackles regardless of whether they can present an alternative or not - or whether those shackles had a point. Bards **destroy** their aspect, but not directly like Princes: their statements invite others to question it of their own volition, or allow it to die through circumventing (or just ignoring) its conventions. The "grand cause" rarely appears (or is) more than aimless spitballing - but as we've discussed, a keen nose will smell gasoline waiting for a match. A Bard may prefer their spiritual fulfillment to remain elusive and mysterious, but they hold no power here; their aspect is the first and favourite thing to fight you on, an impossible standard, a mishandled injustice, what won't hold them back (or accountable), their biggest blind spot, a topic of fascinating theory and no praxis, a lucky guess, a *wrong* guess they defend anyways, a broken fire alarm, a dead parrot, sporadic invincible compassion, an out of nowhere nuclear solution that changes everyone's lives forever, and, sometimes, very rarely, something they know better than everyone else in the room.

That Bards started asking questions at a young age is no surprise - but finding commonalities for how it made them feel, how commonly it was outright abusive, even sibling dynamics, isn't easy unless I'm willing to hold some of them at gunpoint. There is a Bard who stood out to me, who got a ramblin' on recieving "Blood" on the Extended Zodiac. Apparently, his family had lots of relatives passing through and supporting each other, but he didn't like that no one explained why he was supposed to care about these strangers. Since no one gave him a good enough answer, he called them by their first names without specifying "uncle" or "aunt" or whatever. He's proud of that disrespect, and remained proud on his own interpretations of family for years to come, but it sure as hell proves my point.

While it *is* impressive when they show flashes of genius, and those righteous calls of a new world order blow Rogues out of the water, those are both in the rare moments when their jumbled jigsaw of a worldview snap into place - and *none* of that guarantees it'll be actually beneficial for anyone. It's appropo to call a Bard a wildcard, but beyond the pizazz, it highlights that they're a human being you can never truly trust. They're supremely lethargic, undermining anyone who expects more of them and so often failing to get why

anyone has a problem with them in the first place; mistrusting others is reflexive, conjuring second-wind arguments right when you think something might break through. Unqualified and unsolicited, their efforts to offend, enlighten, and question too often highlight how truly out-of-their-depth they are; laughing off wake-up calls and their own critics isn't as funny as they think (or rather, hope) it is. Bards say everything and nothing, believe themselves humble yet ingenious, dogmatic yet skeptical, reject all restrictions yet constantly judge the lives of others. They can be inspirational gurus, manipulative monsters, emotional anchors, common shmucks, and intentionally blur those lines as much as possible. They delight in contradiction and confusion, too often thinking vague answers, directionless arguments, and wiggling out of problems means "winning". They do *want* to help people, they just don't listen to those same people when they try to communicate their patience or priorities - *and that's the most frustrating part*. If a Bard has your back, if they get their priorities in order, then they can make all the competing voices of life seem so little and far away. A Bard's impenetrable defense can actually make them a defender, just like Rogues and Heirs before them...but they'll let you bleed out with a smile, if they can't be convinced to care.

Pidgeons and chessboards.

I can't write something a Bard would like reading that isn't wildly inaccurate. Some people have asked me to. I get it. It's definately possible. Maybe someone else could. But this is what I'm good at, and you KNOW who I'm talking about.

Prospit Bards always believe that they have a point and everybody loves them; on some level, they may know better, but they *prefer* to *believe* otherwise, and simply ignore the cracks in this self-image. They are the breed of Bard who strays the least from their best ideals: speaking truth to power, spreading clarity and curiosity, asking the questions no one else knew to ask. Of course, making good on these qualities is not as easy as simply *appearing* as though they are, which makes it a coinflip if this is all empty promises and hot air. It is instinctual to doubt others, but the capacity to constructively criticize is crippled by how convinient it is to doubt criticism. The fact is, Prospit Bards are already putting in the amount of work they want in the areas they want, but so few can *live* with the reputation of "lazy" or "neglectful" that often earns them; laughing it off is an alternative to thinking about it. Again, they *want* to be a supportive friend, but they don't want to dwell on times or ways they haven't, let alone unpack any accusations of "emotionally invalidating"...and in egregious cases, this can make Prospit Bards dangerously manipulative, exploiting trust and sympathy to secure their easy-living echo chamber. Because of all this, for something to *truly* crack a Prospit Bard's worldview, it will neccesarily have to upturn everything else; put them on the back foot, and you've got a stampede of angry

confusion, throwing accusations everywhere in the hopes it can say “false alarm, I was right about everything the whole time and don’t have to change”. There’s a lesson here familiar to most classes, in that they probably need their own medicine - to be challenged, and offered new perspectives. They’ll probably tell you they already do that plenty...but if they still sound *smug*, feel free to decide that yourself.

You remember that Bard I mentioned earlier? Community leader. Kept things going for a decade, then...slipped it. I mean there was a combination of factors, and I did play a part, but that’s neither here nor there. What matters is, he snapped a few times, and that righteous indignation stuck with me. After a hundred conversations of everything and nothing, of mindless tangents or greivous sin, he had this fire in his eyes - I recoiled. He was Blood-bound, and he certainly earned it. Truth be told, I still respect what he did accomplish, in a way I don’t feel anyone else could’ve.

Another guy who lived at that house was a fucking troglodyte who never paid rent and ate everyone’s marked food in the fridge. Boy did he like listening to himself talk.

Derse Bards know they do not always have a point; that they are an individual prone to wild tangents, bullshit theories, and incessant heckling. A lot of variation in Derse Bards, along with their capacity for change, circles one specific variable: do they believe these compulsions *hamper* their redeemable qualities, or simply magnify the schadenfraude when they prove everyone TOTALLY shouldn’t have underestimated their genius? Even this is rarely a straight answer, but there are Derse Bards who wobble between the two, and Derse Bards who double down on pride that poisons any point they could have had. Be it altruism, malice, egomania or self loathing, it all lies behind a shit-eating grin, pushing every joke too far while mocking everything held with sincerity or sanctity. This behavior is all-but-guaranteed to wind up with their closest friends yelling at them to *shut the fuck up already*, which they’ll probably laugh off. Probably. Depending on the Bard, depending on the relationship, someone drawing a line in the sand might crack the bravado. Put a Derse Bard on the backfoot, and for that brief window they’ll honestly tell you how much they think they’re living up to the ideal of “emotional pillar of support”, or how much they even want to. To admit their faults and guilt in a way where it feels like they genuinely didn’t consider it before, freshly unearthed - and just as easily threatened to be swallowed up in “Eh, nevermind”s as they make exceptions for exceptions. Again, Derse Bards are capable of much more self-awareness than Prospits, and there can be genuine *fear* towards their own unrelenting trainwreck of thought. Ultimately, whether this jackassery is seen as a corruptive poison to their sincere intellectual ambitions, or as the savoir-faire earned from it, it is - tragically - inseperable. Derse Bards must learn to control and focus themselves, lest they surrender their soul entirely to the bit.

We’ve all met at least one - and sometimes, it’s easy to feel like that’s one too many. My DMs on Skype and Discord blasted full of fucked up legally-concerning porn, sent by

people who either had too much faith I'd stick around, or didn't give a shit if I did. I do not look back on them fondly - but, I did find one Derse Bard I wouldn't trade away, and not just because he never stooped to that. I've seen his family - seen what made him build the walls he did. I've tried to help him, as ineffectual as that usually feels. Still. Made sure he's got people he can trust. We all care about him. I have my hopes.

Cronus is regarded as the worst character in Homestuck - one with the least redeemable or likeable qualities. And I get that. But even in that, there's something some people are going to find familiar. For their sake, I'll never give up on Bards.

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you are the truth teller, the opposition, the new standard - if you're not, why are you still talking?

misaligned minds

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MASTERS (ARTISTS, MAGNATES, PUPPETS)

To **create** is to reconcile; that reality failed to meet the picture in your head, but to bridge the gap regardless of whether that's reality's fault or not. To go any further is to walk past the point of no return: to surrender autonomy (and accountability) entirely, and assume authority entirely. When improvisation of principle is no longer argued, but glossed over, feeding the certainty of someone who will know what is and isn't just, forever and always. With the strongest faith that beauty, life, and answers lie in the intangible, there are the few who **command** the full cosmic weight of their aspect. "Wait", you say, "This is still just a mundane human moral framework like the rest, but this sounds like these two classes are completely divorced from reality. How do they function in society?" Be quiet and listen - the show is about to begin.

"Master Class" requires some clarification. It is directly taken from Homestuck's own lexicon, and I can't speak for all of Hussie's intentions, but I certainly wouldn't sell them as "the best and toughest classes" - hell, even in Hussie's own words, Pages win on "power" (whatever that means). Intensity is, as I've already said, not a measure of quality, potential or otherwise. The designation of "Master" for these two will be kept, in regards to how they treat their aspect and their role to it...even if, as with so many classes and their verbs, it seems to go both ways.

Just as well, there's a stigma in the Homestuck community that you shouldn't assume someone is a Lord or Muse cause they're too special - again, they're not, just a baseline personality like the rest. Hussie framed them different in the comic, fine, but the real world comes first, and there's already plenty of Lords all over the fucking place (ESPECIALLY back in the punk house I used to live in). If there's something to take from Homestuck, it is not the wish fulfillment everyone projected of being a super cool ubermentch class: it is the precise portrayal of all of Caliborn's many, many personality flaws. Hell, Calliope isn't perfect either...

LORDS are the most singularly intense, self-assured, and weirdly optimistic living creatures you will ever meet. Bold, brash, and with almost no censor, their raw enthusiasm for life is as contagious as it is contentious - "doubt" is a 5 letter word. Altruistic despite aggression, Lords are drawn to others; they size up their complaints and shortcomings quickly, then try to set them straight with no-nonsense life-advice. However, this desire to mentor only highlights that Lords are *utterly consumed* by their own not-so-little world: they always prioritize their experiences, anecdotes, politics, irritations and mildest opinions over...well, facts, and they defaulty do not reconcile this slurry of identity, memory, and worldview with anything outside it. They zero in on *only* the goals that excite them, taking their own improvised road there, which might be an easy shortcut or *needlessly more difficult*. Scholarship is weighed equally to "a unique brain with great intuition", and the former is optional depending on the person. If this sounds like a two-dimensional cartoon example of the word "egocentric", sure, but **they don't know when they're bluffing**; Lords universally utter insanities like "I have never lost at anything in my life" and "I know more than expert scientists", and either ignore or talk past any transparent evidence to the contrary. This self-confidence leaves them strangled by personal failures they're unable to grasp, yet still capable of succeeding in half the Herculean labours they promise. They advertise themselves as poets with a grand vision, but breaking them to the point of self-awareness means someone matching their force of will - and if you aren't careful, you'll get caught in their orbit instead.

Hussie wrote in Homestuck that "Lords are the most active of active classes", but I don't really agree; they're just an extreme that's best at blocking out the other extreme that composes them, if only because Mages are the *other* extreme on the *same line* that's just more honest about it. The relationship Lords have with masculinity is more pertinent to address, given how they seem to define it: "manly men" should be loud, proud, take no shit, fuck a buncha' babes, be powerful leaders, and shape the world. Course, there's lots of classes men can have (AMABs, that is, don't even get me *started* on transmen), which will either deprioritize or outright ignore these ideals, which questions whether these are qualities Lords embody or invented. Look at the big picture, and realize this isn't even a chicken egg situation - it's a feedback loop. Lords have a sense of self inflated beyond reproach, and in the initial instinct to worship it, they will commonly include their own gender, all while pulling on definitions of what that should entail from around them - definitions which ebb and flow with Lord contributions over the centuries, culture to culture. There are left leaning feminist Lords who can throw that all for a loop, which goes double for out-and-out transwomen Lords (Ladies?) whose womanhood is just as passionately worshipped as befits their class.

...But yes, for the most part, in contemporary society, Lords are macho chauvinist adulterous (seriously, cheating on girlfriends is the free bingo space) douchebags. That one asshole you know who never shut up and never grew up, with no sense of personal space or reading the room, he belongs here. Infinite confidence is unearned confidence, and the last thing you need to do is believe you *can* or *should* be like them. The best Lords - as I define them - as certainly the ones who quit the cliches. Well, tried to, anyways.

We've come a long way from Mages, but in an odd way, Lords are an equal extreme of single-minded, personal zeal...just, so very, very *wild*. Where Maids expand and stress-test the limits of their aspect,

Lords cut the brakes and smash through every direction at once; they **command** their aspect, as a true Inland Empire exporting all the unfiltered conclusions their brain comes to. A Maid's fudged numbers and exceptions *become* the rule, with personal bias and the irritations of inconvenience subsumed into an all-consuming metanarrative with one palette and one interpreter: not a backseat micro-manager, but a hands-on perfect problem solver, which the Lord either believes themselves to be currently, or will be. While that imagined future can be treated concrete enough to demand praise in the unproven present, it - and the rest of their exaggerations - can be exhausting to the Lord themselves as well. This 1-1 synchronization between personal identity and universal meaning goes both ways, as Lords can feel fatigued and unworthy of trying to be (or trying to convince people they totally are) this messianic beacon of talent and wisdom; they are equally **commanded** by their aspect, no matter how they personally rationalize where these expectations are coming from. Of course, self-aggrandizement and self-pity are two sides of the same coin, and one should not take waterworks alone as a sign that Lords are being humble or selfless; in fact, many get used to alternating between the two opportunistically. A Lord's aspect always bends their way; it's an infinite supply of confidence, effortless exaggerations, comically unfair favouritism, their favourite topic, their art, their science, their ultimate technique, the single direction of their boundless imagination, the reason why they're so great, the reason why they're always right, and what you don't have enough of...but, what they'll be happy to teach you, if you do everything they say.

Every Lord's got a story about their childhood. Sometimes, it was pretty bad, and the only way out was a fierce independence of deciding their future - other times, they admit they were spoiled with praise. Sometimes it's a blend of the two, but those ones will only make it sound like the former. I haven't had the best experience with them overall, and a few actual friends won't change the consensus. The bar is low.

Here's the thing: we passed the Goldilocks zone of sustainable hype. Maids are stable so long as they keep their hands busy, but Lords need more fuel to keep the engine running - locked at eleven, no lower. While Lords *can* be workaholics, they dip back into Page coping (and manipulation) mechanisms that Maids indulge more scarcely, if at all: obsessing on the future, mythologizing their hardship, and looking for sympathy to their inadequacies and failed attempts. While these are often real sore spots, the Page dangers are far worse; to omit all inglamorous details, to embellish their agency, to invoke it when they want something (attention, favours, sex), and to try and excuse indefensible acts. A Lord having a heart to heart is a massive red flag; even if they believe it, even if they want help, they're still frighteningly good at hooking and reeling people in with double-think manipulation. Even if it's not, trying to listen to the "depths of their soul" with an open mind only floods the mind with junk data and

delusion that makes the rest sound *sane*. Lords are caught in a pyramid scheme run by their own ego, where reality is unfamiliar outside of it; the reason they bet money and their life on blind impulse, why “big breaks are right around the corner!”, is because they’re a *sucker*, and it’s made them lonely. They’re bound to an aspect and unbound to reality, drowning in fantasy without a Mage’s modesty, a Page’s caution, or a Maid’s dignity to help them survive. Ironically, the only way to fulfill any of their impulses is not to chase them, but control them; to have an open mind to the words of others and accept *some* level of humility. Otherwise, they rot: a collection of excuses, empty promises, emptier threats, immaterial “connections”, intangible talents, lovers who live out of town, all a facade around a simple bully. Even they might realize they’re a sham, and that’s more pitiable than anything else.

“I SWEAR BABE, I SEXTED HER AS A JOKE”

I should be more sympathetic. I’m a Page, Lords are only two notches off. I know what it is to be lost in the “you” that you want to be, to chase something stupid and wonderful when the whole world tells you no. I *know* it’s stupid...but, I still do it, I suppose. It’s an ancient Page curse to think we’re better than Lords cause we’re more polite, more understanding, but really it’s just that we’re better at pretending we are. We can make that real, just like Lords can make their shtick real - or we can **both** be massive crybabies, while distorting our memories (and others) into these sympathetic narratives of how we tried our best and made the most of it all. We were probably just lazy. We were probably just cruel. We were probably just desperate for attention while wearing out the patience of our friends, lost in our delusions of self-importance while chasing skirts. Being a complete shithead is, ultimately, not a class thing.

Good isn’t something you are. It’s something you do.

Prospit Lords want to be your best friend, and rarely notice if you ask them not to. Loud, large, and in charge, their lust for life often blinds them to reading the room, and they’re generally caught off guard if people give them a hard “no”. Seeing their aspect as purely heroic, they act with the assumption that anything they come up with fits into that category. No matter how overconfident, their autopilot leans altruistic; they’re here to help, they’ll listen to your problems (kinda), and even if their solutions suck you can just nod along. They often come off as harmless (if rude), but beyond hour long rants about their sexual conquests and this one dream they had, they’re cannier than their charisma implies. Prospit Lords see and speak life through a hazy dreamworld, yet often are treacherous and opportunistic in action where their words aren’t; the right hand doesn’t know (or ask) what the left is up to. Lies are created hastily, and often defended with fire in their eyes; red in the face, making a scene, alternating between rage and sorrow, all for crimes they did 5 minutes ago and will do 5 minutes later as soon as you turn around. Yes, they *can* grow, mature, and hold themselves responsible, but there is almost no way to tell based on their reaction. Their charismatic confidence is *too* perfect, *too* genuine, and they’re dangerously imaginative in

storytelling. All the rallying cries and pledges to assist are bound to what they think they're "supposed" to say, leaving them charging into catastrophe on blind faith, or throwing people (even confidants and lovers) under the bus when things get too hot. There is a lazy, entitled cruelty hiding behind the performance, which makes louder performances all the more intentional as a smokescreen; if they really did learn to grow past that, if they really do stand for something, trust that through witnesses first, foremost, and perhaps exclusively.

"Life is pain. Anyone who says different is selling something."

I have, sparingly, met a few Prospit Lords I trust. It's a delicate trust, one that I won't hold to if I hear a contradicting story from someone else I trust. I've seen some of them do incredible things. I want to say that's enough. But I've seen Prospit Lords deny domestic violence, rape, shitting on top of a toilet, and stealing 200\$ from me and blaming a friend of mine. They were never good lies - that toilet one admitted it all dramatically to some girl he was close to, and thought no one else was listening at that hour - but they always dig in to try and make those lies work. Even to those I get along with, it's hard to ever shake this unnerving sensation.

There's a lot in fiction who are written as exactly the never-say-die always-smiling heroes they present as; Yakuza 7's Ichiban is a charismatic dreamer, where the game outright systemizes that classic (and medically-concerning) Lord imagination. It's meant to be charming, and I don't mean to say it can't be, but I reiterate the above examples to contrast the damage that kind of one-hand-on-the-steering-wheel sanity can do when you're not *literally* the main character. I mean as another example, Infinity Train's Ryan - while not heinous or anything - is written with both sympathy to his own motives as much as those who feel utterly fatigued trying to constantly work around his egomania.

Heroism is a tricky topic, but, trickier for Lords, when too many just want to pretend to be a hero because it gets them something. Bravery is knowing you're scared and pushing through anyways; if you can't fathom failure, you're just being stupid. Honesty is **telling the truth**; If you know better and won't admit you had a hand in the cookie jar, blubbering like an infant while you think of a million excuses, you're just fucking pathetic.

Derse Lords want to be your worst friend, and don't care if you ask them not to. Their instincts push them to be insistent, impatient, physically violent, straight up rude, and way too proud of all these things...*yet*, a Derse edge makes them far more lucid (perhaps even a sliver of shame) to the absurdity of their self-perception, and the things that come out of their mouth. Now they're almost always nightmares as kids: unrepentant loudmouths believing themselves destined for fame and glory, reflexive in resorting to violence (if they're sure they'll win (expect cheating)) and lying as easily as breathing. It's very possible they won't grow out of this, remaining a temperamental brute weaving complete bullshit into personal myths - success is something stumbled into at this level of violent delusion. If they're smart enough to open up to the world, they can also "defuse", learning to laugh at themselves, nurture others without competing with them, and focus on casually shooting the shit with real friends (despite still having a short temper). It's also possible for them to become self-aware without being self-critical, resulting in a dangerous Maid^2; coldly efficient yet undisguised narcissistic avarice, taking whatever they want and letting the automatic rationalizations sort the

debris. No matter what, they keep the desire to mentor people, which can feel (and be) an afterthought to friends who put up with their behavior. Of course, that "help" is weighed down by Derse Lords reveling in conscious manipulation (still capable of double-think, mind you), which is easy to miss next to someone so transparent in all their other malevolence. Getting people to be their idea of "strong" will often mean playing dirty, and that's either a fun secret or justified only as "irrelevant". There is potential here, sure - real passion, compassion, wit, bravery, pain - but a Lord who knows better is not necessarily a Lord who won't.

Caliborn is a devout believer that all that matters in life - ALL that matters - is looking at the big picture of everything, breathing it all in...and smashing your fist into it so hard that the crater will never go away, and the ripples will shake everything around it. He's violent, rude, more than a little misogynistic, and continually eggs on everyone around him to be at his level of aggressive chaos. Fighting and fucking is wrapped in a paper thin excuse of "art" and "zen", a cheap mockery of Spacebound's tenants that only pushes for more fire. He does WANT people to be around him, to listen, to stop being so useless, but he refuses to do it in a way that's not an ass, and his outright manipulations to get them "on course" give him a hundred options to get his way that don't involve changing who he is. Changing his ways is "weakness", and trying to change the world by breaking it into smithereens is nothing that cannot be healed, ignored, or forgotten by the masses he never truly understood as much as he thought he did. He's a Derse Lord of Time - and so is Johnny Silverhand in Cyberpunk 2077's depiction.

You really think the devs are fans of Homestuck or, more likely, every human being is a goddamn cliché and it doesn't take a genius to spot them? Hell, most of them just end up as Dermott Venture, and we ALL know someone like that. I knew more than a few growing up, and it should be enough to remind everyone that Master classes aren't rare, and they aren't something everyone should aspire to be - most aren't the rockstars they advertise themselves as, and even the superfamous aren't pretty up close.

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Hail, and take notice; behold, and keep silent. Chosen from above, destined to be satiated in every desire dreamed: The Lord, who knows no equal. Intuition and imagination, overflowing in cascading rivers of the vastest soul, singing of the greatest stories, birthed in the loudest symphonies. ---

Through your mouth, the will sings "I am divine" - and you, fool enough to think the words your own?---

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MUSES are unassuming at first glance, and insist upon that impression despite what they volunteer for. Graceful and softspoken, they ask little and often shirk away from the limelight - yet, they have a lot to say, painting a coherent picture of morality that is all encompassing and accounts for all details. Many find themselves in awful situations, and endure insults or jeers that they seem strangely

used to; in healthy environments with friends that care, they appreciate gestures but instinctively reject gifts. What matters to them is art, and many have what seems an unerring ability to pump out creative expressions. They might even be excited to show them off, but it's almost always followed by speeches of how "It's nothing" and "It could be better". It doesn't matter how insistent you are, Muses *prefer* being nothing, because their closest friends are everything. They naturally idolize others with a potency that blots out their self-identity, and this adoration can give Muses friends-bordering-on-followers they never asked for and never ask of...at least, explicitly. Peer past the gentle presentation, and Muses presume, instruct, and demand a great deal; flowery compliments and praise, curt deromantic disapproval, right and wrong answers in an aspect woven without signature but *never* without intent. In poetry, Muses can make all the chaos and lurid insanity of the universe make sense without lifting a finger, enshrining you as the world's (and maybe their) shining savior. In practice, Muses make a lot of unearned assumptions about damn near everything, with a comical obstinence in admitting their engorged beliefs are either personal, or not under persecution. This isn't to say they're especially dangerous, as their wallflower presentation is as convincing to themselves as it is to others...but they *are* in the same weight class as Lords for a reason.

"I'd be your voice
In a world that doesn't listen to you
You can sing through my mouth too
We will harmonize
and all will be well"

-the muses' lullaby, horizon

Muses have instincts to aim the entire weight of their beings onto the lives of other people, and the greater scope of the world around them. This unflinching certainty resolves the frantic anxiety a Sylph has towards things being *almost* perfect, at the cost of smothering their self-worth (and self-preservation) into an almost unsalvageable oblivion. A Muse is inclined to believe their place in the world is as an insignificant witness, only serving so that other people (or any idea of "a higher power") can speak through their hollowed will; Muses are **commanded** by their aspect as they perc

Muses are **commanded** by their aspect, reflecting greatness back at its source...or rather, they **command** their aspect in others, defining the default and available options of those around them, hoping to skip the argument that **creation** admits. While a Muse's wants and whims are under a tight scrutiny to not interfere with this purpose, those are only the opinions they decided were personal, and all the compassion and self-sacrifice in the world doesn't mean nothing will smuggle its

way past their self-deprecation. Even without *anything* to profit from, it's hard to ignore how absolute Muses are, and how supremely difficult it is to change their mind; it is an arrogance without volume, and a pride without identity. The usual manifestation of this is still someone who hates themselves and gives everything to the people they adore, because again, Muses are not as dangerous as Lords, but there's always strings attached to the devotion they give - and they can be fairly rude if they don't think you're worth it. Their aspect hardly even feels like theirs, but it's important to always remember it as such: it's a beauty they bear witness to, a party organized they can't partake in, an endless stream of reassurance and praise, a binding promise of who you have to be (consent optional), a grand theatre stage to deify their friends upon, and what you have so much of - even if they're the only ones who say so.

Always some turmoil, but the ones I know don't talk about it easy. Whatever made them hurt, and they're just doing their best to make it sound beautiful. It's all you can ask of any classpect, but it's so hard to get them to include themselves.

Whatever prestige is supposed to be won by being a "Master Class" seems lost on Muses, and it doesn't take a lot of searching to see why; in the grand game of existence, Lords always believe they're a winner, and Muses believe they already lost everything. The crux of how they frame the world is pedestals for their confidants, and it's only while lifting others up that Muses can be *maybe, possibly*, persuaded out of seclusion. Still, Muses aren't all pure-hearted sugar; there is an alarmingly cold cruelty built into all of them, which reaffirms the "penitent" portion of their worldview. It's a side mostly shown to those they have no interest in accommodating, but even close friends might stretch a Muse's patience thin; like Knights and Sylphs, Muses struggle when they can't process another's behavior within their framework, and frequently won't say if they're running out of patience until it's all spent. While they can be a hurricane in these moments, they usually putter out into apologies and isolation...and then quietly resume their habits, rationalization, and conniptions. While not bossy like Sylphs, they exert more concealed authority, making it difficult to distinguish what they *accept* and what they're trying to *engineer*. Muses are dangerously well equipped to decide your goalposts, intentions, inflections, and limits of potential - as though it was decided by the stars, and not the person in front of you. Sometimes, all they want is your company and attention, still bound to their self-perception of helpless burden...but they are kinda scary if they start thinking they're beyond that. They're fueled by tremendously powerful beliefs that all end with "for your own good", and embracing all that cold, dead isolation gives them confidence that can contextually outweigh compassion. At some point, "away from it all"

became “above you all”: how do you argue with someone who *believes* they have nothing to prove?

AltCalliope might be threatening, but she isn't off-script: both iterations are very much Muses, but only one started throwing their weight around. I've seen far worse in reality. I have to say religious Muses are the most difficult.

Prospit Muses are calm, content, and transparent about the grandiosity of their beliefs - which, given what we've gone over, still makes them difficult to argue as most definitions of “happy”. Wearing their colours on their sleeve, even their cheeriest moments have an odd melancholy to them, as a distraction to what “matters”. They're the most clearly articulated in the lines they draw between themselves and the rest of the world, and their high-minded principles make them difficult to negotiate with on a personal level. It's harder than it looks to become close enough they'll champion you, and it's harder still if they've been hurt before, finding more ways to rationalize what was already on their mind. They process things alone, and they're not used to people fighting with them, let alone *for* them. Growing past this, becoming more social, learning to trust their happiness, all of these are worth encouraging...but it's still worth keeping an eye on them, even at this point. Open-hearted doesn't mean open-minded, and their reluctance to changing their ways includes all that aforementioned bile. If they go full-on “cold fury harbinger” (for a day, or a lifetime) they won't flinch, selling both the conviction and their declarations with appropriate gravitose. There are obvious missed details and bias, but going face-to-face makes it easy to forget the argument you wanted to make, or what you wanted in general. They have a talent in intimidating others to not step out of line “for their best interest”, which only gets better with practice and internalization. They might even be proud of it, threatening others not to mess with them, but this is mostly just bark and not bite - whether you want to help them or leave them, you just have to remember they're only human.

They're a lot less scary when they don't have actual cosmic power like Calliope, but they still have a way with words. I know exactly who they are and what they're made of, and my blood still runs cold when they want to put the screws on. Course, my circumstances make me a bit more reactive - I didn't grow up with one exactly, but I did get to hear all the arguments. I'll explain later.

...definitely more than a few anime characters here...

Derse Muses sing the same song, but they seem to think it (and themselves) are stupid. Uncertainty and skepticism only drive the Muse's poor self image even further downward, and leave them hesitant to speak the principles they assume no choice but to live by. The silver lining in constantly asking people if they're being a nuisance is that they're much easier to talk to, with their powerful optimism and hero-worship ready to be invoked when people need

it...and the slightly-more-obvious stormcloud is that they're constantly asking people if they're being a nuisance. Derse Muses are woobies, often emotionally taxing at the times where they're not emotionally inspiring. They're also better at consciously recognizing selfishness, making guilt-tripping or other manipulations more intentional (and perhaps, common). Most of the time they just want to ride someone else's coat tails out of their chronic issues, but it's easy to lose track of what the appropriate solutions to those problems are. This behavior can easily become overbearing, but it can also get them hooked by abusers who learn how to manipulate them. It's important Derse Muses learn to set boundries, but they're still dangerous in their own right; they have teeth, even if they always try to hide them

I was in the "best friends" category of a Muse of Heart. I'm not sure I am anymore. Not sure I want to be. Some stuff happened. I mean I always knew she had troubles. I dunno man, Muses are complicated.

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[wip. ironically im kind of lacking creativity on what to write. i mean, harp player, isolated, lonely, remembered by society, speaks of legends...something something]

INVERSION

(FLIP IT TURN WAYS)

Our assigned classpect is not all we are...but not in a way that cannot be systemized with further classpects. People *change*, sure, but alot of the time we change into what's already been brimming under the surface, baked into us since our minds first properly developed. It is our exceptions, our hypocrisies, the roles we run to when we're sick of ourselves, how we help others in ways we don't allow ourselves to be helped, the sides we ignore despite them going off anyways, the shape we take when we need to be *more*. Call it your masculine/feminine/other-kind-of-neither side, call it the persona shadow, call it personal demons, call it whatever you want, but there's a second side to every coin.

Every active has a seperate language for accomodating others, every passive has a distinct voice of their own under the surface, and telling the difference helps us blend them into better combinations. Class inversions **invert the aspect as well**, meaning that we are fully capable of invoking and accepting that which disgusts us for too long of our lives. The terms we set, the lines we draw, the amount we allot, how much we even choose to admit, that is all personal - but at it's

best, we are prepared for any situation, our needs and others, with either side of our personal axis to draw from and *hopefully* enough contentment to defer to those better suited. You want to untangle everything inside, find clear lines for who you are to yourself and who you are to the world? Here's everything you're working with - you decide where it goes, where you aim it, and how important it is to you. Your life is your story; the less control we exert, the more it belongs to the people around us, or the people that made us.

Despite many years of debate, Hussie (at least, someone on their behalf) has claimed that the long controversial "Inversion Theory" is debunked, and irrelevant to Homestuck.

I will argue that every character in Homestuck already follows inversion, and indeed classes would be completely unrecognizable if not for the twin impulses making up who they are, regardless of whether they realize it or not.

And even if that's not enough, every single goddamn human being in reality displays classpect inversion that it doesn't matter what we apply to Homestuck or not.

Personally, as a Page of Time, I think there's a certain thrill in **stealing choices** and new forms of personal creativity, in a way where we all benefit. So I'm gonna.

INVERSION CONT: QUICK GLOSSARY OF TERMS I MADE UP (I'VE GONE MAD WITH POWER)

Impulse: We have to recontextualize classpects as a whole, as it's impossible (or at least, unprecedented) to have one without it's mirror twin. Every single class described only has its habits *because* of the interplay; a passive class with pride, breaking points, and self-loathing is expressing their active side, as much as the ways active classes show compassion (or at least concern) invokes their passive. This isn't a class "changing", it's just shifting the spotlight to which side is highlighted more, with no amount of conscious supression or invokation changing that neither will ever truly go away. Therefore, there are two impulses, and both want seperate things at the same time, but not in a way where they can't both win. For simplicity, these will be referred to as a "[class] impulse"; i.e., Class X has an X impulse and a Y impulse, Class Y has a Y impulse and an X impulse, but this is universal and will never involve Z or B or whichever. Confusing the two impulses is, if nothing else, unfulfilling, so harmonizing them will be the consistently reccomended endgoal.

{Primary/Main}{Secondary/Inverted}: While both impulses exist, classes aren't a pointless distinguishment: a Mage of Time and an Heir of Space will both want and think roughly the same things, but their first aspect is considered "good" (usually) and their inverted aspect is considered "untrustworthy/unfamiliar/evil" (usually). Learning to respect and utilize these talents is important, but doesn't change one's default state (and personal favourites).

To elaborate on what I mentioned at the start of the brochure, my SpaceWitch friend has proposed the idea that there's something to explore in an even fuller inversion - inverted intensity, so you swap 1-4 and 2-3. This loses the whole "two halves of the same mind" practical examination I'm focusing on, but there *might* be something to it beyond acknowledging the absolute polar opposites of a class. People get pent up or burnt out too easy, and that's kind of reflected when a class half-asses their inverse. I'll try to only mention it in passing, since it's speculation on top of speculation on top of speculation, all on the topic of real human lives with a lot to lose.

True [class]: As above, while the inverted impulse is a valid filter to thoughts and actions, and classes can learn (or will accidentally display without prior knowledge) attributes and attitudes of their inversion, it doesn't change their default. Our hypothetical Mage of Time and Heir of Space would definitely have a lot of things to talk about and common life experiences, but their priorities, focus, and habits only reinforce original classification - it's best to think of an inversion as an "honourary" or "substitute" class.

Mind you I am 100% down for ascended class names; I mean "Thief" and "Knight" fit together as "Mercenary" so good it's fucking maddening it's not canon! Even the coloured pajamas Homestuck uses would go GREAT with some contrasting palletes!

Misfire: When an inverted (or, on rare occasion, primary) impulse is either ignored or consciously suppressed, it still manifests in a way where an individual is still "verbing their aspect". Without the benefits of moderation or intent, this expression of beliefs is usually pretty far from anything positive, mishandling the potential to make meanings or romanticize healthy states of being, especially in regards to life's curveballs. **Do not try to "pick" which side of yourself is "correct" out of misplaced shame.** No arrangement of classes or aspects is evil; precarious, dangerous, volatile, absolutely, but *never* evil, *never* useless, and *never* without another side to balance it out.

The idiot that tries to only feed one wolf is the idiot who hasn't bothered to tame a feral wolf that even *they're* admitting they can't get rid of. It's a fucking wolf. Use it to pull sleds and eat people. No bad dogs, only bad owners.

..."Verbing the aspect" kinda sounds like innuendo, actually...

Invert (verb): As previously stated, class inversions are always active in at least some regard, and define all manner of behaviors for either class; to picture a class impulse in complete isolation is, ultimately, a matter of pure hypotheticals. If the term "Invert" is used, it is meant to refer to the consciously recognized shift an individual goes through where they drift away from, or reject, their primary identity - or, the second identity, if done again. If there was ever a moment in the previous descriptions where a class was described as being prone to behaviors of "retiring" from their intrinsic objective, or simply having conniptions that do not fall in line with the discussed programming, we were almost certainly discussing inversion the whole time.

Free will is found in the cracks of classpects, not anything we put up front. I am predisposed to say that, but given the evidence, I can't imagine saying anything else.

INVERSION CONT 2: ASPECT AKIMBO

(ATTUNE, ADAPT, ALCHEMIZE)

If we're going to be discussing how classes smush together, it's important to quickly preface how aspects fit as well. They're only oil and water if one were to try and invoke either in the same way one does their primary, which is why it must be tackled on our own terms - a deeply personal thing, to redeem all we fear and turn our eyes from. While it's unlikely something this brief will appease everybody, it might be enough to nudge longstanding ennui on a healthier path.

Remember, the more the two aspects start to sound like the same thing, the more progress you're making.

I'll be honest, what's coming is kind of sacchrine. Hopeful. Maybe edging on "telling you how to live your life" even more than I have already. Somehow, it feels more suspicious if it's optimistic, you know? I dunno it's just...this *is* the nice stuff. This is, too often, just the way people finally figure themselves out and feel at peace. Isn't it kind of exciting to be able to, you know, systemize that?

This stuff helped me close the gap with stuff I'd been wrestling with for decades. It's not like anything would've done it; an old internet quiz put together by a fan back in 2012ish gave me "Page of Space". I knew I was a Page, I knew I had a creative streak, but even though I tried not to overthink it, I still felt like my impulsivity and impatience were interfering with it. I felt more like a failure than ever, like all my family's violence and trauma had corrupted what was I was supposed to be. Even if I hadn't read "Page of Space", it's not like anyone else had any good advice for who I was or what I should do - people have been telling me to slow down my entire life, always seeing what they want to see, or what never was.

The Extended Zodiac, getting back into Homestuck, it all...it didn't give me any *new* words to articulate myself. It just gave me a pat on the back for everything already brewing, with the acknowledgment that I am still 2 notches off from Caliborn (and, at its core, I'm not doing much different). I've been doing my best to see how well this stuff helps others, and I've had some nice moments of helping them close the gap with their demons - or hearing their epiphanies, and being just a little salty I had it down in print for at least a year.

I'm not a nice person. But I am an optimistic one.

WE'RE ALL WE'VE GOT

SPACE AND TIME: Unconditional Contentment, Frail Mortality, Absurdity of Existence, Legacy, Delight in the Temporary, Derealization, Oblivion, Lucid Autonomy

Space and Time have the most and least incentive to change respectively. Time's paradoxical status as "the belief against beliefs" breaks upon reflection, like Wile E. Coyote over a cliff. As inevitably as it fetishizes inevitabilities, the Time aspect cannibalizes itself: the "belief of the material world" was never more than hypocrisy, where the idea that the vast uncaring universe has any kind of objective victory condition - let alone "money, sex, and power" - is grossly naive. None of it ever mattered, none of it could ever matter, nothing has ever mattered, we will all pass into bleak oblivion and we may as

well have done nothing at all. Time is as much a lying delusion as it accused Space of being (which it still totally is), but the only way to make either true is to see the other side: live wire in the silent garden, artist in the screaming meat fuck. Time's obsession with the material can evolve from projection to honest deference, where Space flourishes in a world it wrote off; that when nothing matters, *everything* matters, and the complete lack of any "grand scheme of things" means every possible concept of every possible thing is exactly as significant as we choose for it to be. Space's concepts become convictions to be fought and killed over, while Time expands surrender past a *cosmic* will, into the now multicoloured meatscape of humanity - every loss is someone else's win, to die is one more great adventure. Between the bindings of "I gotta" and "I cannot intervene", there is the only true proof of existence, and the only true choice: "I'm gonna do whatever the fuck I want, and whatever happens, happens". Time would rather imagine itself a corpse or machine, just as much as Space would imagine itself a flower or cloud, but only together do they make where the falling angel meets the rising ape - a miracle of matter, a god unto itself. a human being.

Always found it funny how often punk rock blends into Buddhism.

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INDULGANCE, WITHIN REASON

HEART AND MIND: Contradictive Priorities, Human Error, Weighing all Whims Exceptions to Systems, Compartamentalization, Accountability, Contextual Logic

It is the signature of the Heart and Mind aspects to mythologize their emotions and goals respectively, blossoming either into a flower that overtakes the other. Regardless of favouritism, this is the same framework - even moreso than it initially appears. There are logical approaches to life, but no logical destinations, no "objective success". Mind is less machine as it is simply faux-superego, chasing objectivity with the most palatable cultivation of subjectivity; why speak for only yourself, when you can - no, *should* - speak for everyone? More than ever, it should be apparent why the Mind aspect rests between Space and Hope, as there is a longing to escape the more material inverted aspect - which is only, you know, *literally* personal bias. Sure, Heart is openly self-sabotaging, openly unpleasant, openly illogical - yet, does its efforts to systemize and organize itself create a logic in protest? Is there not inherent categorization in which desires are more "deserving"? Whether this is bleedover or a true mirror of Mind's systemization, it goes both ways: is the "calm chessmaster" anything besides another mask? Is the culling of emotion not simply picking

favourites? Run rampant, the Mindbound demonize all errant emotions until the depressive shame creates a feedback loop, and the Heartbound mythologize identity to the point it is divorced of any brain it represents. If the Heartbound enshrine their obtrusive multifacets, is the Mind's craving for apersonal enlightenment not one more? If the Mindbound seek unbiased clarity, is it not hypocritical to reject these compulsions, rather than organize them as well? In synthesis, the system of the soul, where intellect admits what it has to gain, where one *selects* which masks define the whole, and where understanding and empathy beget each other. To say anything more is to kill the point, and take the adventure of self-discovery from those who cherish it the most.

Nepeta still deserved better.

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DARE TO DREAM

HOPE AND RAGE: Salvaging Defeat, Exhausting Possibilities, Testing Thresholds, Redefining the Impossible, Merit of Delusion, Defiant Compromises, Happy Sisyphus

Hope and Rage are naturally combative in a way few aspects are, but this facet only highlights the commonality of "defiance"; one champions beliefs strong enough to break any ceiling, while the other lives in grim worship *of* the ceiling and its capability to beat back the petulant. As both exist inside in the same individual, schisms within create schisms without, resulting in a sub-axis of "Whatever you say, it's not worth the argument" and "You're bullshit and everything you say is bullshit"...but either approach can surround an idealistic *or* practical worldview, and the nature of inversion only further highlights the blurred lines between them. All the sweetest sentiments and promising possibilities the Hope aspect can muster won't *get* anywhere without the pragmatism to engineer them, or the raw wrath to stand by them in the face of everything; if the odds really are a million to one, you need to be able to admit that, or you won't have any chance at all. Likewise, Rage still needs *some* principles to hold to, *some* beauty worth defending, or its only remaining ideal (hypocritically) is nothing besides bitter resignation, indiscriminate humiliation, and self-sabotaging spirals. There's something to be said about how the "reality and fantasy" angle is similar to the Time and Space axis, but this is so much less existential contemplation and so much more rallying cries. Hope and Rage create individuals driven to question what is, expose or champion falsehoods (sometimes *both*), pick apart the foundation, demand better in moral outrage, tearing away at life's shit-coated ugly while capable of the

most honest appreciations of what can't be removed - and perhaps, why it *shouldn't* be. With practice and maturation, they are capable of miracles that move mountains, or the gentle grace of making everything feel okay when nothing else can be done. The silver lining and the stormcloud - but always better with the thunder to back it up.

Hussie claimed "Hope" as the most powerful aspect. Even if you don't agree, I think it's still important to know why they said it, just as with the praise to Pages. Hell, I know two Rogues of Rage...

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MAKE YOUR OWN FATE

LIGHT AND VOID: Contradictive Conclusions, Invoked Narrative, Integration of the Forgotten, Blind Eyes, Making Myths, Hyperbolic History, Delight in Artifice

It is the Lightbound's rigid definitions of their primary class that makes them the most in need of inversion - or rather, to have it directly pointed out to them all the many times they've *already been* their Void class, expressing Void-flavoured sentiments. Then again, what truly is "Void-flavoured"? Even the Voidbound themselves often don't know, making their Lightsided inversion not only easier for themselves to describe, but often their most memorable qualities to those around them; the part that stands out, the part that talks, the part that confronts. You wanna know what Void is? It is freedom without Breath's purposeful optimism, subjectivity without needing Heart's violent passion, and expression without Space's greater calling. The Void aspect asks for nothing and provides nothing - in doing so, it reflects the individual clearer than any other. Whim, hobbies, emotions, ideas, only ever sorted as unsorted, all shrouded in a shrug; the associated class embraces or encourages this state, then does whatever it wanted to do in the closest display of free will. And yet, a side will always contemplate and pine for those constrictive conclusions of "destiny" - one more delusion, as all aspects are. Symbols are not of the material world, not a tangible thing, but they run alongside it; man cannot exist without making a narrative over what's in front of us. It is Void that tempers these cathartic calls to action, sorting legend and history, myth and nonsense. In the retreat, Void makes its own meanings, and appreciates those that have none yet; although, "don't rush to conclusions" is a conclusion itself, possibly from someone who's trying to avoid what the Light might see. It's important not to decide what did or didn't happen - only to *choose* how relevant we want it to be, drawing constellations in the sky. Everyone has a story, and we all get to choose what it is - even if we think it was chosen for us, and even if we think we never did.

My brain hurts everytime I try to articulate the Void aspect. I'm serious, it's some cursed knowledge shit. I re-read this and its like a blot.

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WARTS AND ALL

LIFE AND DOOM: Processed Pain, Support Networks, Boundaries, Therapy, Accommodation, Reconciliation, Perfect Imperfections, Acceptance of the Unsalvagable

Aspects are not any kind of literal elemental energy, and it's those who aren't bound to an axis who most plainly see that and avoid overcomplicating the solutions they want; for this pair, the mythological war between pitching in or wallowing hurts everyone. For the Lifebound, trying to create a perfect happy community from the top down is itself a doomed effort, where being unable to admit the problems makes those problems worse. For the Doombound, "rot for rot's sake" extremism starves both the inverted Life aspect's cravings, and the basic human need for socialization; what compromises and comraderie come about are still tentative, if misery and isolation are still seen as some "default" that all will - or *should* - return to. If the goalposts are placed exclusively on impossible perfection or all-consuming pessimism, then the mundane subject matter of friendships, community, and depression all become warped beyond recognition. To lecture others on the dread they *should* be feeling, the healing they *should* be wanting, all reflects far more on the zealous conniptions of the individual saying it. To recognize the other side of oneself in inversion still creates a binary, still deifies every smile or sneer, when the best resolution is far more likely to involve deference. Engineering an ideal social environment will ultimately require cooperation, built from many preferences and perspectives that - 5 times out of 6 - will not involve an axis that obsesses on it. To manifest anything, one has to understand the minutia of health and sickness first, without demanding storybook endings (even grim ones). The romance comes from appreciating what's already there, and intentionally invoking greater imagery if it helps in the one thing both aspects agree on: comfort. In radiance, in rot; from ability, to need. In every result and process, every struggle or resignation, a beauty that transcends and ties together the best and worst of all of us.

Just go watch the first two Addams Family movies.

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SENTIMENTAL SCARS

BREATH AND BLOOD: True Leadership, Fleeting Connections, Collective Direction, New Traditions, Found Family, Forgive without Forgetting, Nostalgia, Lucid Morality

That the Blood aspect encourages leaders is obvious - that Breath does, less so. Breath breaks away from the old, forgives sins, forgets grudges, soothes all pain, and insists that the past is the past; while this assurance of an optimistic future is innately magnetic, why does it care about who listens, let alone who follows? Blood is very much sins, grudges, punishment, sacrifice and staying in the past...but then, why coordinate to goals at all, if suffering itself is a core tenant? The proclivity to leadership is built out of both aspects, regardless of which one is the figurehead; in a vacuum, they are only reliefs to that role, either seduced to new frontiers or humbled back into line. Yet, with these aspects doing their best to avoid internal conflict, the balance between them is fickle. Blood and Breath still too easily redouble themselves into absolutes judged worthy by itself, where Breathbound have completely relieved themselves of the burden of others burdens, and the Bloodbound harden grudges and expect debts until *everyone* isn't "pulling their weight". In this haze of immediate intuition, both aspects will create people too goddamn pleased with themselves to realize no one's happy - not even them. It is principle beyond interrogation - only "Freedom" and "Family" - where only the simplest (not easiest) solutions are sought. The truth is, these might actually be the hardest aspects to balance, where the inversion is only seen in harsh snaps - but those can still be harsh snaps that are *chosen*. The advice here is not about what concepts these two aspects explore together, but for those bound to snap out of their seductive dogma for a second and ask what they actually want to do; what traditions to keep, what innovations to try, which friends to keep, which friends to make, what to punish, what to forgive, why why *why*? You have to take back control of your life, or you'll either give it to everyone else, or forget you ever had it in the first place.

I still love my brother. I always will.

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Now, how to fit that full picture inside the canvases we already discussed...

TIER 1: FATE AND FREE WILL (WELCOME TO THE BIG LEAGUES)

With all the high-strung high-stakes we've discussed, it's easy to diminish the importance of those most subtle and (hopefully) most humble. Hypothetically, this document could have been arranged to explain the most intense first and work backwards, or any combination, and it wouldn't change that Prophets and Magicians are extremes in their own right. They can draw strength from others or themselves, and do either so elegantly they have no incentive to try both; without ambition, potential is a hypothetical that jeopardizes more than entices. Sure, they have their sore spots and rough patches, dealing with it and not making it anyone else's problem...but you turn those few weaknesses into strengths, you wind up with more than the sum of your parts.

As soon as you **know** your fate, you can **change** it.

MAGES AND HEIRS are the living, breathing, manifested form of that old "Serenity to accept the things I can't change, courage to change the things I can, wisdom to blah blah blah" quote. They're both steady, quiet about their own issues, and don't trust anyone to do anything without them - yet, both fear their other habits, to the point of defining themselves by the exclusion for as long as possible. The consistent throughline is someone sure of themselves while always being *twitchy* in regards to the outside world; Heirs commit to "fixing" everything, Mages shut themselves away, and these exaggerated self-perceptions hamstring *both* of their inevitable snaps into one another. Sure, fix everyone else's problems, but a docile presentation masks that Heirs are not always unable to fix their own issues: they may be *unwilling*, acknowledging that as infrequently as possible. For the intentionally alienated Mage, trying to become invested in other people's problems always threatens to disturb their existing conclusions - "subtle guidance" often misfires as "bare minimum of appeasement". Crisis and stress results in Heirs snapping into Mage isolation without a road back, or Mages snapping into action and making it worse from a precedent of (or continuing) disinterest in negotiation or basic empathy. Neither sees alternatives: the personal prophet and the Chosen One have only ever seen one route for themselves, but there was always middle ground between saving or ignoring everyone around them.

Blood Mage and Light Mage - John knows friendship (and the mess of ancestry his dad goes on about), Equius knows his culture (and their ridiculous myths), and both put up a decent fight before...well, I guess it didn't really go great for either of them, especially if we're counting epilogues. Beyond that, Meulin's an awful Heir of Mind, but being awful at it only highlights she is one, at least partially. If we're trusting Hussie that all the dancestors were based on fanon misrepresentation, then people underplaying Sollux's preference for isolation explains a lot...

My brother is, still, an Heir of Breath. He also claims to know our father more than most. I still dispute that, and think it's a somewhat pressing situation to address. I wonder if we'll ever see eye to eye.

To **know** yourself as something static and true, while trying to **change** the lives of those around you with a gentle touch is, all in all, a pretty great combination of traits...which makes it a tragedy that it's snapped in two like a wishbone. Mages and Heirs suffocate a side of themselves, and miss the nuance of their opposed aspect in the process - but not for lack of trying. A misfiring Heir impulse is *just enough* to get people to leave a Mage alone most days, and malleable enough to do whatever they need it to do on the days they feel like getting involved - all essentially selfish. What's more interesting is that a True Heir's single-mindedness and sturdy resolve is almost entirely the result of being built of Mage components...but that's a monkey paw situation if there ever was one. Where a True Mage sees imperfections as part of the greater whole, an Heir's Mage impulse sees a world of imperfections they lack the language to accept - which only further explains why a Mage's Heir-ish involvements are so often unapologetic, on top of the previously discussed self-imposed hinderences. They're both really good at each other's job on the days they don't misread the instruction manual - yet, more than efficiency, they're denying half their available methods to just feel *okay* with the world.

See it was SpaceWitch talking about her brother (a Derse Heir, with both of them raised by a Derse Lord), drawing a conclusion between Heirs and Lords that made me send her my constructed MSpaint chart - and that's what got her so excited she designed the globe model. So then, the idea that Heirs and Lords are the truest opposite? There's merit. Those moments of individuality have such weight (and sometimes violence) where you can see a similarity of approach, the same way Lords underestimate the weight of their mentoring. I'd argue this is more of a pent-up misfire, but maybe there is something worth examining on their relationship...hell, John and Caliborn are the closest Homestuck has to a "true good guy" and "true bad guy". There's a narrative there if you want, no matter how you slice it; the true King with magic they doubt or downplay, and the rich tyrant with a musical magic seen as a dubious excuse.

As for Mages? Like I've said, they have a tendency to get pretty..."excited", sometimes, tripping into a social fervor they usually don't humor. I've seen it enough in real life that it makes Meulin's attitude worth keeping in mind...and, kind of funny, given the name I picked for that post-Bard class. We'll get there when we get there, but it's just nice how things work out sometimes.

If you wait long enough, an Heir will understand their Mage side - they just tend to forget how to be an Heir when they do. If you wait a lifetime, there is still no guarantee a Mage will change their strategies, or not feel uncomfortable playing emotional anchor. These are, plainly put, unnecessary limitations placed upon oneself, strangled by comfortable tragedies over unfamiliar hope. Life's more complicated than being "everything to everyone" or "fine" forever, but acknowledging that makes it easier. You don't have to sacrifice or succumb to anything; an Heir is *less* of a hypocrite for taking some of their own advice every now and again, and a Mage's conclusions

become sharper when field-tested. It's going to be hard to unlearn some habits, and harder still to challenge personal narratives, but that doesn't mean anything drastic or sudden - just have an open mind. Be there for other people, but take solace in your own soul when you know it's better to be patient. Be open with your conclusions, allow them to be challenged, and remember whatever calling you're feeling is something you wanted to do on some level. Rejecting it is an option, but that's an internal dialogue; your perception of the outside world and personal responsibilities shouldn't be confused with what's actually happening. You're always where you feel you have to be, but there's power in setting your own terms - we make our own fate.

Heirs are endearing little bundles of self-hatred, and I still hope I can help them finally give a seal of approval to their friends and themselves - to not run as soon as they're not needed, to not plant seeds of doubt so they always are. You can sit on that throne and be a King with the power of prophecy, even reform the monarchy to a democratic parliament...but just as many Heirs are gonna go find a different kingdom to save, or go back to the farmhouse they started in. Maybe more. Maybe all. Even with Mages, it's not like understanding an Heir impulse automatically makes them one; you could go with "Arch-Mage" or "Wizard" for some authority, but the door's open for things as simple as "Alchemist" or "Wanderer". There's a lot of potential new class names and interpretations, but it depends on the individual, and what they want to associate with their own life. I just have my own longings, watching them work magic and hating to see them go. If we can't *own* our classpects, if we can't *do it for us*, because we *choose* to...what's the point? All I can do is open doors, and try not to judge which are walked through.

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WITCHES AND SEERS draw a clean line between personal eccentricity and collected observation - a line that is still crossed from time to time, despite all the connotations regarding its importance. As it turns out, "doing a little for myself" and "neutrally observing the world" have such low upkeep it's easy to avoid internal schisms as much as external, and neither class is going to be in a huge hurry to fight for the spotlight - or fight for anything, when they can wait, manipulate, or settle. They chase and present contentment, but they can't cheerfully stay two steps ahead of depression forever; they *can* minimize fallout exceptionally well, but let's start this discussion with the pretext that hiding your pain is a failstate. Other people are reliable to hold on to, and one can always drudge up some personal fixes, but this is something they likely already know and practice; helping them cope more efficiently is on the table, but arguing they're more important than they think they are feels more pressing. They both tend to dance around insecurities, and see presenting otherwise as a conscious falsehood...but this idea that somewhere, deep down, they're "no good" is an unconscious falsehood. Even if you fit both pieces together, they might still see themselves as broken with no way to smooth out those edges, but you know what? Good. Maybe being prickly is form and not fragmentation; helps you catch the light better to shine, and helps stab a few people who have it coming too.

What? We going to pretend for a second that Terezi and Rose don't match to "Witch of Heart" and "Witch of Void" flawlessly? It's easy as soon as you realize you were allowed to look for it, just as much as Feferi and Jade make compelling Seers of Doom and Time respectively. I've known WAY too many in real life to not have this scent down like a bloodhound, and I hope I can make a compelling enough case that you see it too.

And let's not pretend Kankri didn't have *sass*.

To **change** what concerns you, and to **know** the world around you; the interplay is obvious, but the result is still a perception of being untethered, if not outright "lesser". An unknowable loose element in a sea of quantifiable figures - static, understandable, organized, attuned. Seers often plunge head first, but Witches tread water in interesting ways. A misfiring Seer impulse will manifest in dependencies to louder voices and colour their Witch-Spiral-Speech_(tm) (which, honestly, always was just snapping into an angry Seer) but it also results in mistrusting their own praise and understandings; Witches can make beautiful speeches towards the great impartiality of the universe that comfort and enlighten, but they were rarely *trying* to. This leads to downplaying whatever they said in the past despite its lingering good, and rarely speaking up if they consciously recognize the stakes - call it stagefright, call it unworthiness, it's still unnecessary. For Seers, a misfiring Witch impulse is usually for screwing with people, and the precise way that they're able to influence them into favourable (or just interesting) positions. While this can be altruistic (despite firm - even exclusive - control), it is a misfire by virtue of how *horribly* Seers practice self-care. True Witches may also not solve longstanding problems or accept outside help, but they do cope more efficiently; as previously mentioned, Seers are really good at hiding the fact they're running their life off a cliff from the people who would object to that. They're outsiders who try to stay outsiders, accomplishing little more than the Witches who feel like outsiders no matter where they go.

"You must really hate me, huh?", they say, always, eventually, vocalizing the assumptions they nurse. Do they want an answer? A retort? Of course their friends love them, of course they'd *fight* for them, but that answer is hard to trust. Seers try to logic their helplessness, Witches romanticize their helplessness...both tend to wind up with people who *keep* them helpless. If you reach out to pick them up, they can always push back.

This? This here? This text? This is the nuclear approach of someone who's sick of watching it happen. Sure it's still their decision, but it's a purposefully misinformed decision, and they both know that - if they didn't, they wouldn't be so surgical in arguing against it. If you lose the academia *and* the romance, it's harder to justify the death-flag they keep putting on their head, and the company they keep. Not impossible. I can't stop them. But either know better, or lie better, because it hurts to watch.

The pain is slight, but consistant - familiarity lulls one into a false sense of security. Self-loathing to smile through, at the risk of tainting the idea of smiles - or you tough it out, and set your terms for who you've got a problem with. A passive impulse to be someone's side character, an active impulse to live a seperate story; Seers treat their

place in the world as utility, where Witches treat moments of splendor they have no instinct to explain to anyone as some justification they shouldn't reach further. Both aspects end up underplayed, but are we to assume low upkeep means low quality? Fuck that - a few bad spots and stutters don't change either class being unforgettable, with sharp wits that can be forgiven for misjudging their own self-worth. A framework of the world is always fuzzy, but Witches turn their eyes from it where Seers try to see a whole that never comes into focus - it's *supposed* to be fuzzy, so those twitchy hands can get experimenting. If you're worried about hurting people, don't; if you think you're insignificant, know better; if you've got something you find beautiful, share it, because it doesn't change that it always belonged to you. Don't ever feel like you don't belong just because you're lucid; the world is yours to upset or improve, paired with enough explanation to guide your hands and enthrall those involved. You're exactly who you're supposed to be, and you know exactly where you want to be - so do it, cause you never needed me or anyone else to tell you.

I have a soft spot for both classes - endearing, trustworthy, and low fallout even when they abuse that trust. It's a hurt I can live with. Some people will have been hurt worse, and others might preach them even more favor. You make your own conclusions; my job (as I define it) is to help identify them first and foremost. They're always interesting company, if nothing else.

TIER 2: BONDS AND LIBERATION

(SET YOUR LIMITS, THEN CROSS THEM)

Needless suffering is not hidden in regards to the class pairs discussed here; struggling to follow or break every rule is, in fact, emotionally and physically draining. Whether Servant or Outlaw, there is a self perception of being expendable pawns or off the board, not here for accolades or authority. Of course we are in control of our own brain delusions, and it's important to take ownership of that, but it does mean that finding themselves isn't going to *abandon* their complexes. There's limitations in sticking to procedure, just as many in subverting it, and every class here *knows* that by virtue of constantly waxing wistful for a life they've artificially deemed off limits.

Exploit only the rules that can be justified, and **steal** everything else.

PAGES AND ROGUES are an (initially) unsustainable union of impossible personal standards and fragile alternatives that barely belong to them. Both sides tend to cancel themselves out if one is favoured without the other, and they spiral out of control on the occasions they don't. A Page impulse is basically non-functional out of

the box, and can only be entertained in fantasy and harmless imitation; for True Pages, this is the starting point while trying to attain practical application, while Rogues have their aforementioned difficulty ascertaining their sense of self due to atrophy. Without confidence, Rogues too easily fall into their also-aforementioned mess of excuses and depersonalization...which is the *exact same rut* Pages perform in complete depressive despondancy. It's even worse since the inverted aspect is a failure state, with Pages retreating to the corrosion of their doubts and failures, guilty for reprieve to the expectations hanging over their head - and what does that say about Rogues? To have the "impossible standard of who you're supposed to be" read as a threat? They're an outlaw running from themselves, trying to save others from the pressure *they* put themselves under, while broken Pages too often end up gloomier diet-Rogues from the same ordeal. The searchlight and the spotlight are one in the same, but regardless of how much or little an individual decides to stand under it, it *belongs* to them first and foremost.

Pages are not a passive class. I do, however, get why you might think that.

You're just wrong.

Rufioh being the manifestation of misrepresentation surrounding Tavros is as clear as day. Even if we neglect Hussie's word, their writing sticks: Tavros fears letting loose, while casually able to negotiate the bonds of others, and freely gifting his suffering to people who don't deserve it. Rufioh, meanwhile, *seems to have trouble with commitment*, and his much more defined excuses are to remedy that. His little bunch of lost boys staying together are a Page of Blood half-manifesting, but only ever half, where Tavros's grand calls to action are always about going forward. I also shouldn't need to explain how Nepeta may resemble the diligence and conviction of a Page of Mind, or how Jake and Xefros both reflect the approaches of trying to balance Hope and Rage from different sides.

It should also be pretty friggin' obvious how interested **I** am in negotiating and reinventing the creative expressions of everyone around me - which is to say, you, reading this. It's not unbecoming of a Page of Time, it's almost *inevitable*. I'm fine with that.

Exploit an aspect to its limits, and **steal** another to freely fix problems as they come - take a step back, and it's almost *too* simple how these two fit together. The passive impulse allows Pages to meet people halfway with negotiations for their craziest ideas, where the active impulse gives Rogues a method and backbone to their most divisive disagreements or bohemian desires, and either class can alternate as it suits them...at an end point, anyways. Pages are beaten and broken by their primary impulse, and misread their second impulse as "cheating" - *guilty* pleasures, *undeserved* breaks, *incorrect* shortcuts. These ideas exist for a reason; Page beliefs do not work out the gate, never will, and they need to rest and compromise. More than that, one of their most quintessential characteristics (and the reason they're a black sheep between Mages and Maids) is a Rogue touch: **stealing solutions** by absorbing quotes, morals, gimmicks, and

everything else from the world around them. Pages reinforce their personal identity out of what they can do for people around them, but they can still twist this into meeting people halfway while only ever dragging them to their side - to manipulate and subvert with the inverse, only accepting control. Still, if you let everyone else have their way every time, then too many voices corrupt and dismantle certainties, and violate one's self worth. Rogues have the same problem, without often realizing they *had* personal certainties in the first place. Restructuring their primary passive aspect into whatever people want doesn't need a Page worldview, but it does *help* when they want to stand up to someone and stick to their promises. Rogues always put pressure on themselves, but it's not for the reasons they think - they, too, are built not to serve *people*, but their *gut*. Unreasonable as it might be, it's still theirs; more than demonizing their opposed aspect, they can do it correctly.

My childhood was too much yelling, pressure, insults; people age, but rarely grow. It's taken a long time to try and choose who I am, but I'm not blind to why it is this way: a suffocated ideal of determination unearned and out of reach, loose excuses trying to keep up with contradictory beliefs and values. So many unfair arguments from people trying to protect their egos, and so much fragile hypocrisy from those who didn't believe in anything past short-sighted irritations of the moment. I took in everything they said, tried to make it work, and now I'm strung out on fundamentals of existence for the rest of my life - at least Rogues get to acknowledge it less.

Everybody wants something - we take contentment in things that hurt us. I've been spending my whole life trying to make that something functional. If you are a Page or Rogue, I hope I can save you some time, and sneak in some alternatives I wish I had sooner. If something good comes of it, then hopefully we all aren't just broken records, looped on trauma.

They both *want* to help people, but it is in questioning themselves that the other side never makes it too far; ignored obligations, ignored alternatives, two impulses that blame the other fighting for the position of superego, corroded by caveats they won't admit exist for a *reason*. Even in hypothetical isolation, the Page impulse doesn't have enough juice to justify totality; suffocating doubts creep in through their hesitation, telling them they're wasting themselves on childish futility...and in there is still the only kindness that can ease the weight of the world off their shoulders. Rogues all have conniptions of some selfishness they can't remove from themselves, of the sin they can't make up for, but that was always the stubborn lurch of the Page voice that won't die - that standing up for an idea, standing up for *themselves*, isn't as complicated as they want it to be. Concession doesn't always mean corruption, and neither is a failure for being unable to maintain bravado or compassion permanently; sometimes, there's simply no motivation for theatre, and no sympathy left for those who don't deserve a second chance. Be kind to yourself, and don't let yourself be taken advantage of: you're not lesser, you're not a failure, you're not a stressball. The fact you can function without needing to prove that to everyone is just a reminder you only ever

needed to prove it to yourself. You can shine like a damn diamond if you want, be your best self even on off days, talk back to your friends if you think they're selling themselves short...or walk away from it all, refusing to carry everybody to the finish line, and free of the guilt that you were ever supposed to. You can be a hero, a friend, a stranger; whatever you can think of, however far it goes, whenever you think is fair. Just remember to follow your own advice - you made it for yourself first, after all.

You know, I've had too many people try to decide who I should be - which is ironic given everything I'm doing here. I really am trying to meet people halfway, inbetween highlighting bad habits and pits (dunking on Bards is probably the most needless violence but still). It's just...my family especially, they always give me weird looks. Maybe they think the aspie wasn't going to notice, but it's all I'm looking for; I got some high minded ideas of where I want to go, and everyone keeps chiming in. Settle, don't settle, assert myself more...I dunno. Maybe my brain locked on to this Page/Rogue dynamic just because I felt I had to meet them all simultaneously, but there's a rule to Pages: we only learn the lessons we want to learn. We pick who we emulate, and we awkwardly try to argue our way around the things that repel us. It's hard. We can't tell the difference between reprieve and a rut most days. But we still have to try. It's a part of us, the same way our fragile compromises with others are ourselves to. There's a reason I've made this document so personal despite ostensibly being a public resource, and it's for more than whim, limitations of my language, or the merit of anecdotes

I don't know about everyone, but rather than get weighed down by nobility, I like the individualism of "adventurer" or "explorer". "Champion" if I'm feeling presumptuous - and I'll decide for myself if it is or not. That goes the same for anyone reading this.

I swear Tavros is the only one who actually made it.

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THIEVES AND KNIGHTS have diametrically opposed self-perceptions, to the point of making the comparison *more* obvious. Thieves are always trying to prove themselves against the establishment (that they project), and Knights are always trying to enforce a system that never benefits (or includes) themselves. Both are *terrified* of submitting to the other impulse, both *inevitably* will at various points of their lives, and they seem to think that there's no going back once they do. These impulses result in the same worldview no matter what's at the forefront at any given time: they're an immutably bad person, they do evil because of that, they do good to make up for that, nothing ever fills the hole inside, nothing about their relationship to the world can be changed, Prospits try to settle with it, Dersites laugh about it, pain begets pain. Look, if you think your entire life, for decades spent and decades to come, boils down to "surpress all emotion and be human footstool" or "hurt everyone and everything around me in wild aggression", then you're *fucked* both ways because the other voice never goes away, and wasn't the problem in the first place. No one is making you do anything (usually), and this mythmaking surrounding a need for penance and a need for protest only strangles ones ability to parse reality. They are

the Scorpion and the Frog both - which is to say they are neither, and pretending otherwise is what keeps eating them alive.

Hey, remember when Vriska burnt out and had depressed consolation flirts with Meenah who was also rather burnt out? Great. Good talk. Place that mentally next to Dave Strider's mental breakdown, and Karkat's for flavour. We all on the same page?

Steal an aspect to rewrite it in your favour, while **exploiting** another for those around you - easy on their own, but tricky to synergize. Thieves and Knights may have their hard snaps when they're utterly sick of themselves, but their twin impulses manifest and misfire constantly no matter what they do. Redoubling the earlier discussed dynamic with Witches/Seers, seeing others as "more stable/cohesive", it makes sense why Thieves latch on to others as readily as they're threatened by them; their personal worth is easily substituted by connection, both in more explicitly Knight-y brotherhood and threadbare (yet possessive) connections to famous or fictional figures. Course, if they're putting all their eggs in their primary aspect, then the opposed one only manifests as **exploiting** a negative in others: the same reflex Knights have to put people on a pedestal is misfired to shove them into the ground, *and* to reinforce bonds so they won't leave. To keep any company whatsoever, Thieves make themselves useful in a way that must be unique, and Knights are no different: their opposed aspect is often something **stolen** for exclusive control, as a talent they've "got covered" so you don't have to. Knights fret constantly about personal delights, but they already *do* that by rewriting it as one more "responsibility" they're incredibly defensive to give up. These are some wild mental gymnastics around a pretty basic mechanism: help your friends as a specific service, and do what you want if you don't think it's a good idea at the time. All this "I am garbage" or "I have to fight everyone who believes I'm garbage" thought is, fundamentally, optional. All classpect beliefs are fake, but these two really are making things needlessly difficult for themselves - and *even this process of self-hatred* is too easily defended as part of the personal identity they'll fight for.

Karkat's raw thirst for leadership (and John) isn't a distraction, it's a function. In the same way, Dave's organized self-hatred (and webcomic) reflect a very unique approach to the Space aspect; he's not rejecting creativity and choice, he's making his own. In regards to his "I'm not a hero" speech, it's a free-flowing creativity he's using to martyr himself with, and that is...so, so tragically true to life. Thieves and Knights both wear their abuses with them, but there's something so mournful about how Knights try to re-engineer the hostility that made them.

Somehow, it's the Thief in my life who wound up the most well-adjusted, and remains one of my closer friends - and they're lightbound, the filthy Vriska-kin.

Thieves care about their friends, and balancing that with their hell-raising is uneasy; they'll burn out, and reigniting that raw passion to face the world and chase their dreams is tricky. The more Knights rely on their immutable worldview, the more fragile it will become to a

world that does not give a shit; when it shatters, they crash and burn into a faux-Thiefhood of ugly spite where they try to make everyone hate them as much as they hate themselves. Somewhere, between these two impulses, and inside the individuals that live with them, is the moderation to balance them out - to not pick either narrative of the sinner or slave, but dissolve them to their base elements and alchemize anew. The fact is, Knights are allowed a break - they're also allowed to be annoying, unhelpful, selfish, and probably *should* without trying to "make it useful" or "stuff it down". Thieves don't need to pretend to be any worse than they are; they're wounded, they know that, but romanticizing it doesn't heal it and neither does hurting friends. You're not an everlasting protector of the innocent or a remorseless killer; you can bluff it, get shit done, but you have to know it's fake first and foremost. Contemplate who you are past your best *and* worst qualities - what you actually want, who you've actually got a problem with, and what you really want to be remembered for. Maybe it's best to take a break from defining yourself as a Thief or Knight...at least, not until you've decided what you want to define it - and yourself - as.

Like I said, "Mercenary" is a fun combo, but...yeah. There's human lives in the mix - and pretty volatile ones. Feels like pre-retcon Vriska is the only one who really figured it out...but maybe I should show more sympathy to Dave. Always rubbed me the wrong way how he pretty much "retired" timehood. It works for him, but...hell, there's plenty of issues with Homestuck's later writing.

TIER 3: MIRACLES AND SCIENCE (THE GRAY BETWEEN GIVING IN AND GIVING UP)

Aspects are beliefs, and most of those are synonymous with "things that make us happy". The Royals touch of destruction should ideally temper, the Fae most of all, but the difficulties are well documented.

Despite this defined skepticism, they're not actually as practical as they think (which is probably pretty obvious to the people around them). The damaged scraps of their main aspect only highlight what fills the null space; an inverted aspect they believe in *too* much, and

an inverted class that keeps them ready for action (if not, strictly speaking, stable). Princes don't have to be misreable and Bards don't have to be...Bards, but it means walking back on everything (or at least half of everything) they think they are. It's equally unfamiliar for the Fae, but they really do have more in common than they think, and there's possibility past the insult.

All is equal; nothing can be **created** without being **destroyed**, and vice versa.

MAIDS AND BARDS are, somehow, staggeringly, the same class. While their reputations can seem irreconcilable, and it remains one of the most truly *segmented* inversions, the twin impulses are always present - just, you know, not really “balanced”. The Maid impulse is a wellspring of self-assurance and self-sufficiency, and Bards can sit comfortably (probably too comfortably) on this background process while their actual primary aspect fails to get off the ground. Of course, Bards do have that aforementioned super-dedicated niche of willpower and followthrough - it's just not their main interest compared to these unsubstantiated hypotheticals and tangents. Maids do this too, but it's harder to recognize from all that impulsive spirit barreling them forward; moments of wild wonder and slippery fascinations, glimpsing something past preconceptions, all before sliding back into rigid routines. They're both too comfortable with who they are, where a Bard's active side rarely strays past it's essentials as a personal motive, and a Maid's passive side rarely evolves into anything besides “aimless and unproductive heckling”. Still, no matter how opposed, is this any different than Pages and Rogues? It's easy to let people off the hook, but harder to do it for yourself; easy to see how things could be better, but harder to get loud and force it to happen. We are playing with much higher stakes of course, but Maids will work themselves to death if they don't find *substance* in the world outside...and, you know, Bards could stand to put their productivity on offer, instead of always stargazing.

Gamzee being a Maid of Hope really tracks, even at his most wrathful moments; Destroyers overall better display their inverted aspect, like I've been saying. For Maids, I have the benefit of knowing one (for sure, anyways, but I do have guesses on an aunt of mine). Maid of Light, but you bet your ass she has some *weird* guesses sometimes. Sometimes that's making narratives where there are none, and sometimes it's openly fucking around with the unknown without any pretenses - there's a Bard in there, and they do synergize decently well. You want anything more, go watch Peridot's arc from Steven Universe (my money's on Mind/Heart).

Creating instances of your aspect is hard to do without **destroying** the other one you see out there, using the Maid impulse as a monster truck engine and the Bard impulse as a battering ram. Now obviously this is a pretty friggin' well oiled machine for Maids, but we're defining misfire by needless failure states and fighting a perfectly good aspect...which Maids do *alot*. Again, Maids do have a vague outline of what the world is outside their obligations, and who they could be outside of it, but it's not so much slowing down so much as charging full speed in the opposite direction; a Bard's touch in confusion, questions, juggling and discarding what they're having so much trouble trying to grasp. It's fascinating to tear into something and find it's true essence, but it's simpler to just **destroy** it indiscriminately - and whether they admit it or not, Bards don't do much different. Again, it's pretty rare they step up to plate and truly invoke their primary aspect, rather than cheerfully disregard anything

not up to their standard. A misfiring Maid impulse really shows the worst side of it; pulling excuses and reassurances out of one's ass, with no practical altruism. Without the necessity of putting their self-worth in it, Bards **create** their own echo chamber, too easily shielding them from criticism and accountability...and maybe, if we don't show respect and sympathy to the toil of Maids, we can acknowledge they often wind up doing the same thing.

Bard of Mind, one of my oldest friends, always goes "but do you know the REAL me, beyond the LAYERS" kind of talk whenever I try to press him, especially on classpects. At least now I know where it's coming from, and he's finally made some progress at appreciating other people's emotions rather than (only) doubting everyone's strategies.

You know, Bards are the double-inverse of a Page. Maybe that's why I'm so irked by them.

Neither class here is in a hurry to change, where figuring themselves out is always a personal quest - one that, hypocritically, stands next to disinterestedly making quick assumptions of those around them. Ironically, invoking the passive side is one of the best ways for Maids to tend to their mental health, finding purpose in doing very little. Also ironically, a Bard's active side is an excellent way to assist those around them, so long as they're willing to stop patting themselves on the back and actually fulfill a request thrown their way. There is a balance between aggressively doing everything and aggressively doing nothing, but neither class is likely to find it unless something truly breaks their stride; no matter what endless reserves they can pull personally, it doesn't *help* anyone if they don't *listen* to anyone. Independence and self-sufficiency is a great attribute, but solipsism is dangerous in a way that's too easily seductive. Even if the differing approaches to the aspects don't line up equally, it's still important to mix and reconcile them as much as possible; the Bard impulse is *designed* to blend and remix the ideas of others, not just fry them into cinders while obviously not giving a shit what anyone says (even though it can (and does (alot))). While neither class creates any kind of natural team-player, there's no inherent nobility to what comes natural in the first place - and a Bard can see that as easily as a Maid could make a counter-example. Maids frequently clean up everyone else's messes without addressing the root, whereas Bards fixate on it (or are at least trying to) without putting their money where their mouth is. Maids and Bards are both terribly difficult to wrangle away from following their path at their own pace...but, at least to their own stories and self-reflection, maybe that's for the best. What matters is taking a chance on routes long since ruled out and laughed away.

I'm not sure what kind of title you could use specifically, but there's certainly an allure to "Trickster spirit meddling with mortals", and the inhuman arcane nature of clowns. Maybe just "Trickster"? I know it's a loaded term in Homestuck's lexicon, but we can afford a few deviations. Ugh, pick whatever name you want - and that goes for friends of Maids and Bards moreso, since they're more likely to read this.

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PRINCES AND SYLPHS actually make significantly more sense than the previously discussed link, both initially and in depth. Poor with boundaries, very defensive, weird assumption of being “in charge” of everyone else, needlessly competitive and petty, most critical in areas they’re nervous to risk attempting, tendency to track people down days after an argument to get the last word in...it’s pretty much the exact same laundry list of bad habits. Sure, their attitudes and focus are in different areas, but the fragile idealism and fragile cynicism aren’t as different as they think (the keyword is fragile). It’s hard to be everyone’s best friend when you overthink it as “a job”, and worse when that “job” is the only distraction from a volatile ennui at who the hell you’re supposed to be and where you fit into the world. Sylphs at least have a “functional” default, where their active side can be ignored as much as possible and misfires can be minimized...but Princes are who they are, warts and all, precisely for having all that darkness at the forefront. In fact, Princes invert regularly over the course of their lives, often invoking their opposed aspect more than their primary one, struggling to make *either* work. There’s a lot to get into here, and its for people who take alot of pride is having their shit sorted all by themselves without any help...but if it can be knocked over by anything, is it worth protecting? You want to help everyone, but you don’t know how to help yourself, and it’s scary when it feels like someone is trying to take control of your last scrap of self. Look, it’s not impossible to synergize the two sides, but they need to be untangled from the psychological rat’s nest of paranoid power-keg. If that hurts to hear, stop making it true.

Eridan and Dirk having a Rage and Mind side should be no surprise given their words and actions. Aranea’s relationship with irrelevancy is under her strict jurisdiction; when new information threatened it, she could no longer allow it. Much the same with Kanaya, who, besides some paticular ideas of “what’s gotta happen”, rather famously defied death as a vampire. It’s Aradia who gave herself more time in the hourglass, more of a rush of being alive - it’s Kanaya who broke the hourglass, rejecting its sanctity and meaning.

The less I say about my mother the better. I will say, at least, that Sylphs and Princes are the loudest theists or atheists. The absolute loudest.

To “**destroy** an aspect” is a phrase that makes sense, but still misses the subtleties; you’re stuck attacking it because it isn’t what you want it to be, and you can’t truly annihilate it either. You *want* to chisel it into something great, but perfectionism too easily smashes it to rubble...it just doesn’t actually kill it. So what then of **creating** the opposed one, in a passive way meant for everyone? A responsibility, altruistic and unquestioned? See this is easy to understand with Sylphs: **create** a road for everyone else, while showing a personal **destructive** disgust at what stands in its way. Their pride is in the sadistic stranglehold, but they rarely consciously realize that the

wreckage left over is *precisely* organized the way they want it to be; their callous off-hand remarks, snide pride, all of it identical to True Princes. On the other hand, Princes are playing a truly miserable game of telephone trying to interpret these impulses: their “responsibility to others” is...the strangled scraps of their primary aspect? Is the corruption and dysfunction they see in others a **creation** of naturally plotting a course for everyone else, trying to intervene to an invented evil? If they pull the “happiness is impossible, we must all accept the failure and helplessness that surrounds us” speech, is that just them barely starting to see good in their opposed aspect, but projecting it as universal? Why is even self-destruction meant to be some “way it has to be”? It feels like every Prince reinvention is just a reshuffling of win-states and fail-states, where every misfire is recognized enough to scare them into doing something reckless...but no matter how many times they reshuffle, it's the same fucking deck. They need to stop thinking no one can understand what they're going through, or that all that self-loathing is the core of their identity rather than the very predictable result of utterly failing to grasp it.

They're not monsters, but they'd prefer that, over being called a cliché. I don't know how they expect to move past that if they won't recognize the problems they can't romanticize. It gets gross. They're not some tragic byronic hero, they're just half nurturing caretaker and half easily dissatisfied. At least Sylphs accept the first one.

I keep thinking about the whole “I raised myself” Prince childhood. Cause again, Sylphs are...fuzzy, on details. It'd check out, but we're not even measuring trauma so much as a child's rationalizations to it. Would Kanaya have been an outright Prince of Time with a Y chromosome (or whatever troll equivalent)? Is the pressure of serving her caste and being unable to do anything about it something quintessential to her becoming a Sylph of Space? Hussie decides that, but they've been right about enough things to make me worry about the people in my life, and what made them.

It's not *new* for Princes to wield their opposed aspect, but it's too often manipulative; bait, lies, invented evils, invented shelter, whatever accomplishes the task of making people rely on them and submit to their cataclysmic worldview. It's completely foreign for Sylphs to acknowledge their opposed aspect as something to build up, as something unifying instead of justifying their control. The Prince impulse is a dangerous liability, but it has far more utility than needlessly chasing moral oblivion and settling for abusive hypocrisy - it was *never* about what is destroyed, but what is spared. The undeniable truths, the beauty beneath the rot, the thing that never needed “fixing” in the first place - you know, your fucking self-identity. Sure it's fragile, but letting it breathe grows it into inner strength; if you hide it, try to feed its sickness with external validation, it just withers and poisons all your kindness. So often, the two classes devolve into a broken narcissist, obsessed with proving an infantile image of superiority. Denying this fearful insignificance only internalizes (and displays) it further, while you try to prove that your

“individual special opinions” are the “objective correct way to living”. Here’s a fun tip: good and evil aren’t real, we made them up. There is no correct way to live, but yours never had to be. You can sustain healthy relationships without either of you being dependent. You’re not allowed to *decide* you didn’t hurt someone; some people are unreasonable, but if that’s 99% of the people you meet **that is a red flag and you should reconsider why “you” are the only “sane” person you know.** If you can’t cleanly fall back on who you are, you only push forward into who you aren’t, mythologizing the dichotomy into a matter of life and death for everyone around you - and it isn’t. It’s just you. But maybe the world will keep spinning regardless of you trying to push it or slow it down. Maybe that’s okay.

Foreign fairy representative and Princes both fit well into the “could totally pull a coup”. Originally I had fancy poetry speeches for here too, but I thought against it. Still...Princes tapping into fairy magic, louder and dangerous in a way that competes with the controlled cantrips of Heirs; there’s something to that, some resolution of the implied “arc” of the royal scientist trying to burn away the magical world out of fear. Just as well, give Sylphs cannons and militias, see if we can trust them, right? Maybe? Inversion is healthy, but it’s not an obligation, I suppose. Besides, even if we ignore what will or won’t go over well, it’s just plain easier to say what can’t work compared to what might. There’s a lesson there, I’m sure, but I’m no Prince. I exploit destruction, and maybe my frustrated obsession is in trying to exploit the destroyers - there’s always so much good buried there, but they’d all rather spiral.

The less I go into who’s hurt me, the better - probably. If there are any Princes...just find a way forward. Not by burning the past, but by learning from it. It’s work. You’re going to fuck up and relapse. The trick isn’t making sure it doesn’t happen, the trick is being okay with getting back up.

TIER 4: HEAVEN AND EARTH (THE HARDEST BRIDGE TO BUILD)

No, you aren’t forgetting anything, don’t scroll back to check. Information was omitted, and will continue to be until we have addressed all prerequisite information. Where Tier 3 showed the imbalances present in high intensity inversion, this is a step beyond. A Master’s 100% certainty on the shape of contentment is only matched by a 100% certainty in the shape of discontent, and while that translates to an expectation of controlling both, it creates the *wildest* extremes of what someone is capable of...or at least, capable of *justifying*.

As exemplar and patriot, **command**; as invader and pariah, **conquer**.

A consistency among see-saw models is the idea that Lords and Muses balance themselves out. As a paired class, yes - as an inversion, no. It’s a damn shame Hussie didn’t talk about any other classes (explicitly), but 14 doesn’t really balance out evenly, does it? Odd numbered 7, no room for pairs, it should make you suspicious. Admittedly, I missed it. I just kept asking questions, and finally found someone that violated my assumptions while making everything else snap into place. Jesus I was in an insomniac fugue state for like 4 days writing that all down...anyways, we’ll get to it. Despite being an information-focused document, a bit of narrative suspense helps build a more usable image, I believe.

I settled on "Conquer" eventually, but the earliest one I went with was "Corrupt". Too harsh there. "Falcify", still kinda. "Transform" for awhile, but it didn't communicate the hostility involved. Conquer works, even if it does invite the RTS jokes.

LORDS AND...well, what would you call it? A Lord's passive side? Sure, they're self-obsessed by design, but there's something at play here: their mentoring instinct to set people straight, the dismissive skepticism, and play aggressive with the inverse, all feel *similar* to the Maid/Bard interplay. An active impulse needs an equally strong passive impulse to balance it out - keyword there being "impulse". Lords are more than their ego, more than the "idea" of themselves, or else they wouldn't be capable of the dangerous manipulations we've discussed before; silent, cold pragmatism, that has no voice or language. Lords are ***not*** brutally honest when it doesn't suit them, but the overwhelming presence of their primary impulse can disguise the existence of anything else they're plotting - even to themselves, as we've discussed with the hasty lies often employed. Where Mages have unexplained exceptions, Pages have shameful scheming, and Maids have unproductive heckling, Lords have manufactured misrealities - as soon as they learn to do it intentionally, they become some of the most dangerous liars on the fucking planet. This impacts how Lords interact with their opposed aspect - which is to say, without sanctity, hesitation, or care for what was before. Not to **command** with genuine (albeit often selfish and masturbatory) belief, but absolute adaptation, **conquered** in totality. Sure, Lords often try to reshape the world to revolve around them ("Buddy, the REAL YOU would be doing what I like doing, so stop having an opinion"), but that's still a misfire, ignoring this passive impulse's merit outside of revolving around the primary. There is potential here, but it should be obvious how difficult it is to hold Lords accountable to their actions. Still...it's the only road for they themselves to escape their own orbit, even if it's the same one to drag outsiders into it.

Caliborn. Space aspect. Creativity. Come on, it works for Johnny Silverhand too - that man understood zen and meditation only as it pertained to violent punk rock rebellion, didn't he? Yes it was a cheap excuse to hook followers and cause chaos, but there is a dynamic, and I've known enough real life Lords to say there's truth to it. We always know what we fight against, don't we?

MUSES...don't seem to make much time for themselves, do they? Their mouth is for your voice, their soul is hollowed to make room for yours, etc etc. They build a frightening amount of their identity on who's in their life, bordering on (and sometimes very much being) obsession. They are not prone to voice or condone what they get out of it, but it *does* seem just-maybe-suspiciously close to the inverted aspect they've otherwise written off. A Prince impulse in a Sylph is diminished, but never dead; much like the associated aspect, the sense of self cannot ever be completely **destroyed**, and thus the

struggle rages eternal. Muses seem to have lost that fight and been snuffed out...or did they? A Muse's sense of self appears **conquered** into a dormant submission - but, again, critically, even if the Muse hasn't noticed, *not dead*. That voice of cold spite Muses break out is *definitely* coming from somewhere, but pinning down everything it is and wants is imperceptible, as off-limits to us as a Muse's inverted aspect is to them - but even then, there still are shades, both in outbursts and subtle assumptions. It is a Muse's primary passive aspect that can so easily overwrite wills like a Lords, but it is doing so while advertising itself as impersonal, which Muses themselves (probably) believe; it is a Muse's active side, their inverted aspect, that hides underneath these speeches. It is everything they will take for themselves, everything they stand to gain, in an aspect they so often vilify - but should they? Shouldn't there be some safe environment to let this out without hurting anyone? With how zealous and esoteric Muses are, it's easy to assume they're exaggerating why they must always be kept in line. In truth, even now, it feels fair to say *Muses* still aren't as dangerous as they say. After all, that little voice isn't in the driver's seat...at least, for them.

That Muse of Heart I know always jokes about being "smooth-brained". Maybe a coincidence. She draws some intricate predictions sometimes though - abandons them quickly, doesn't look for a fight, but they're not gone. Just as well, a Muse of Hope I knew (Chinese Christian would you believe it) had alot of seething fury, which she repeatedly expressed penitence over. Believe you me, Muses have bite.

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So what's going on here? Aspects without belief, impulses without classes, wants without frameworks? It's very difficult to describe, and if we jump into it now, it's very easy to get the wrong impression about all of this; if you don't see how it completes the system, you might think it jeopardizes it. That if some people truly *are* so malleable, then we all are, and classes are illusionary, temporary, and pointless. That we alone have it within us to be who we want to be, and anything else can be overcome when we once thought it was all we ever would be.

It's a noble idea. But it's wrong.

We will continue building nobility out of maximizing the effectiveness, happiness, and health of the classes; to push their boundries and compulsions and training them to do what we want them to do. We will do this without lying, without shutting our eyes from the world, without cheap consolation that ignores reality instead of fiercely negotiating with it. Classes may be everpresent, but they are not all we are, and its understanding the mechanisms and intricacies that allows us to stretch the immutable as far as it goes. So if we're going

to sail into uncharted waters, let's double check that the boat is seaworthy.

DISCREPANCIES

(CLOSE DOESN'T COUNT)

A class is a default, a status quo, a habit. You whittle them down to its essence and it seems trivial, but a modest seed blossoms into an intricate flower - even if it is pretty damn similar to all the other flowers of its type. Course, there's still only so much you can sum up in a few paragraphs; we adapt to social contexts, we mature, and sometimes we just try really hard to be someone else. Even if the rubberband always snaps back eventually, it can still make it pretty far, and our class impulses can be reinvented or reconciled in a way that makes us unfamiliar to others. For the outliers, for the deviations, for the circumstantial, for the not-yet-relapsed, let's have a lightning round with the usual suspects we've all grown to understand.

Originally I had inversions after discrepancies, but this works better. It's best to get the static information out the gate first, THEN address variables.

Heirs and Pages both want to do good, be there for you, and apply themselves. They also both feel a compulsion to rise to challenges and high stakes, with strong opinions on "What I gotta do". The obvious difference is that Heirs are deft with details to the point of losing themselves in it, where Pages are so intimidated by the scope it's a cliché for them to run with their tail between their legs, begging anyone else to take their place. Obviously, it's not a rule, and working that Rogue impulse can help a Page try to put themselves in the same position as Heirs. Team centerpiece therapist/leader or not, however, doesn't change the endgoal: Pages want to win, Heirs want to fight. While distant, impossible dreams may stay the same, Pages would very much like to be there, and will struggle to keep their spirits up if it feels like they're not making any progress. Heirs live for the process, and integrate other wills rather seamlessly; Pages can feel overwhelmed when they're directly identified as someone's anchor, preferring intervention on their own (brief) terms. They have a passive side, but they're not a passive class, where compassion has to fit next to static ideas of principle, self-improvement, and showmanship. For Heirs, compassionate concern comes first, and they'll often exempt themselves from going down the road they keep encouraging to others - which is to say, as their chosen win-state, without the open fragility and meekness that defines Pages living by proxy. Besides, if Heirs had the selfish-streak of vanity that Pages did, they wouldn't be so hesitant to call themselves a monarch, would they? Their (quiet) pride is as the sheepdog - Pages want glitz, glam,

glory, superpowers, the works. Trying to share that with others is mostly guilt, as is trying to “earn” to the right to such indulgences.

You know Raimi Spider-Man was a solid Page, but it feels like most iterations lean Heir.

Heirs and Knights are confused only in dry descriptions, and *never* when you put them in the same room together. While they both have bravado to act like everything’s fine, it’s serving very different purposes; Heirs challenge others, contest opinions, and drop the docile act when they need to get serious. Knights are not *docile*; serious, goofy, aggravating, but just about never the quietest voice in the room, and you don’t have to dig too far to find a lot of loyalty to those close. If there are problems, it’s because people need to be reminded who they are and have their will (real or imagined) enacted - not *doubted*, let alone course-corrected. It’s why Knights are so prone to cracking when someone explicitly says they didn’t ask for it - and on that note, it’s pretty hard to confuse a Thief and a Mage. Broken Heirs will drift off, but they really don’t burn bridges; they have moments of curt and direct confrontation, yes, but not twitchy verbal harassment with low blows and self-loathing.

This is very embarrassing to mention but, back during the early days of getting into this, I assumed my brother was a Knight, not an Heir. I mean sure, I had rougher descriptions, contradictory fan theories, limited friends I could poke, but...it nags at me. There’s earlier versions of this document that get really emotional at the end of the Knight section - I mean it for him, full stop, said as much, and I feel so stupid I fucked it up. I’ve internalized this paranoia that I need to be perfect, or else I void my right to speak at all - even then, I’ve still got early guesses that were dead right, and finding other people as examples and info sources has only made me sharper. Then again, maybe that’s all just Page excuse making. I shouldn’t have been hasty, where real people’s heads are on the line; there’s a potential to help as much as hurt with all this. It always feels like it never should have been me to be writing all this. My friends agree with what I write, but rarely what I’m doing - at least those that do say it really helped. I have to try - I want to try. Someone should. But I also know why I believe that.

I did keep working on the Heirs section, and when I got it into a good state, I showed him. I mean LifeHeir seemed pleased enough, but my brother actually had a double-take - some acknowledgement of his secrets and conceptions, of faces he’s played when I was never in the room. Even now, I feel so...warm, and fuzzy and acknowledged for that. Still, it caught him off guard, and he’s defaulted back to “concerned dismissal” ever since.

He’s never going to read this.

Witches and Seers are an inverse that so rarely forms anything quite so saturated. Sure, in a vacuum, Witches are the wild free spirit of innocent (and perhaps indecent) imagination, and Seers are the concerned lecturer of ascetic selflessness, but it’s not *that* hard to be both. Witches will happily prop others up, regaling another’s own life to them as a misunderstood hero; the “misunderstood” part seems pertinent from someone with complications surrounding the side of themselves that handles a greater understanding of the world, picking favourites with a Seer framework without dignifying it any further. Seers are not always so awkward, and with enough mirth (or raw

feminine wiles, which makes this more unlikely for AMAB Seers), it's easy to see they only had one language to ever cut loose - even if there's still shame to it, as the first thing to be sacrificed when "shit gets serious". Ultimately, as an outsider, there is simply too much gray area to find anything resembling a smoking gun...but, they're both pretty approachable, and liable to entertain talks of internet personality systems, so why not ask them directly? Ultimately, both classes can certainly identify their favourite aspect faster than their favourite face, and tell you which side it belongs to - which is probably important to sort out. Remember, all this casual free-stepping doesn't change that one side of their psyche is still labelled "evil, repress or remove whenever possible".

On a more *spicy* note, Seers rarely seem to think of themselves as romantic interests; if they do hook up with someone, they study and analyze them just like everyone else. They do think they're probably not a good choice of partner, but that can be a touchy subject they'd rather ignore. By contrast, Witches fetishize it, always with the speeches spilling out of their mouths of how better off the world is without them, and how truly "resolved" they are with a current partner who's tamed/saved them. They couldn't bear the thought of going back into the dating scene, hurting people, they found true love even if no one understands, etc etc blah blah blah blah...

Witches are fun - but they're also very, very, very cliché-ridden.

Witches and Rogues both play things pretty safe most days, and don't make a big deal out of things. Yes, Rogues are protective and respond to trouble, but they also might chicken out, and that can be similar to a Witch's more fickle nature. Both won't have the best idea of who "they" are personally, and won't be in a hurry to have that conversation. As cautious as they both are with people in their circle, it is more noticable how Witches..."fumble" at empathy. Working that Seer impulse is weird for them, and it's not much besides talk - they tend to be most confused if it *does* make people feel better. Rogues are incredibly attentive to friends in trouble, and are going to blame themselves if there's anything they couldn't do to help (though of course this self-loathing can often sabotage their legitimate capability). If Witches blame themselves for anything, it's going to be either "immutable" or long in the past; distractions to help friends feel better will be much more take-it-or-leave-it. If nothing else, Rogues don't have the Witch-Spiral-Speech_(tm) - one day, they're just gone.

Mages and Maids are both active, distant, and not used to second guessing things - which can sometimes blur the line a little. This confusion is cleared up not in conversation, but in action: Prospit Maids will happily tell you they'd prefer to be left alone and work on something important for you, whereas Prospit Mages will happily display how much they want to be left alone and won't tell you what they're working on because it doesn't concern you. Prospit Maids take people with them where Prospit Mages are cheerfully solitary; Derse

Maids are immutably *relentless*, compared to the more wandering Derse Mages. Ultimately, Mages can more readily own up to doing only what they want and take a nap, whereas any Maid has trouble remembering no one's forcing them to do anything; what they consider to be "stable" will shatter every now and again, but you really can't break a Mage's stride even if you cut off one of their limbs. Mages might flirt with ruthlessness if there is a legitimate threat (real or imagined) to a friend, but it's an exception that proves the rule - and Maids are a little less protective anyways, with a Bard instinct shining through.

And somehow, Pages are inbetween them. You know after a decade of working on it, I feel I've found my groove and that I can live as a true middle-ground between Mages and Maids, but it's still *weird*. It's not that way by default, so is my ability to better integrate the wills of others a choice or an outlier? There's this instability to all Tier 2's that Tier 3's resolve by not recognizing the imbalance...I think. Ask a neurologist. Or don't, they'll probably think you're crazy.

Mages and Pages are separated by a single notch, though Prospits hold no similar surface traits (despite a clear comparison in approach). Derse variants, however, are more easily conflated - both unsure of their place in the world, both wanting to do more, both wanting to help people, both likely to apologize for things they shouldn't, both possible to be pushed around by people who appear to know better than them (and rarely do, if they're resorting to pushes). However, a Page's ennui and frantic people-pleasing is often overbearing, whereas even the most codependent Mage isn't going to be one insult away from an anxiety attack 24/7. Crucially, a Page's realization will still incorporate their need to be a savior; a Derse Mage's realization (and again, a Prospit Mage's starting point) will often be "I did what I wanted to do and no longer owe the world anything, bye", much to the disappointment of others who think their friend is still underselling themselves - and they might be, but they're still *content* with it. Derse Mages can be endearing (even downright eccentric) dorks, but there is no incentive or fuel to go nuclear.

A Mage buddy of mine was a bit put off when I first told him my conclusion on our relation; he's had lots of people like me in his life, and I guess it felt a bit unpleasant. Like realizing your crush is related to you or something. It's important to recognize that commonality though, as Mages can offer "their" way of living in much the same function - though it's more of an aquired taste.

I think it's also important to not push Mages into Page goals, or think a Page is going to settle and do something safe. The more you confuse people who think they're no good, and people who don't care, the more damage is done. It's important to recognize people for who they are AND who they could be, without simply projecting or assuming everyone is the same. They're not. We're not. I hope I can be forgiven for mistakes I've made in trying to categorize what I believe to be immutable.

Pages and Seers can get a little futzy if Pages have enough confidence to stop freaking out about themselves, but not so much that they'll openly take accountability. Living by a code and structure,

along with all the depersonalizing mentioned, will mimic certain attributes of a Seer's clinical approach...but it certainly won't hold back the underlying lust for heroics, the "mutually beneficial" arrangements leaning selfish, and the Rogue touch of bending their words to try and help everybody (however they define "help"). Seers do have biases and wants, but they're as muffled and inconsequential as possible, which is why they have their reputation. Still, no matter who they are at their best and worst, Pages will often incorporate this mini-archetype if they think it'll help them reach people. Trying to chase verbose neutrality helps them get their points across without *explicitly appearing* as though it's personal, and helps sidestep the everpresent anxiety that they need to justify the right to be themselves. After all, they are but a humble servant, only here to help you be the best you can be - and that's how they get you. This is a cry for help.

Witches and Maids do actually blur a little as Prospits, where an easy going presentation can hide that Maids are not easy going at all. Dedicated hobbyists, but who's doing it for the hobbies and who for the dedication? What's a Witch's irreverancy, and what's a half-Bard's disinterest? Put them under some duress (or, more compassionately, pay attention when it happens) and it's best to look at who toughs through problems the simplest and most direct way; I ain't saying Witches can't buckle down and fight, but they do fight *smarter* and not *harder*. Maids are stubborn powerhouses, and overwriting reality for daring to offend their principles is their fucking jam.

Aradia and Damara are a defined contrast, but Hussie clearly figured *someone* needed reminding on what a Maid's habits are.

Heirs and Maids aren't so much a comparison as they are a mistake. I mean a Maid trying to work with people is good, and an Heir having more faith in manifesting their will is also good. It's just...I mean it's much more unlikely an Heir will try, first off, since the slow and subtle process always gives them the most dopamine compared to rushing anything along. The thing is, a Maid trying to stuff down their impatience completely and play it slow is *agonizing*. Disagreeing with others has to be as high octane as their regular self - i.e, Bards. The engine was not built to run in first gear, and where Maids hit a familiar burnout by taking on too much, they're *torn apart existentially* if they try to keep filtering their instincts. Again, stubborn powerhouses, but it's a doomed effort to be stubborn against one's own stubborn nature. If people don't want what a Maid is selling, it's probably best to focus on what they can do alone; it will be enough for them, and they can find where that intersects with others later.

Knowing an actual Heir of Life, it's funnier watching Jane ruin herself trying to remedy her broken world and broken team. I can't help but feel my pal would just roll his

sleeves up and feel alive trying to fix Dirk, Jake, and Roxy, you know? Jesus, knowing him, he might've actually found a way.

Maids are one of the more popular archetypes for heroines. I get it. Part of me wishes we got more variety. Damn it all, maybe Bards should get some encouragement.

Knights and Sylphs aren't off by much, which makes them harder to separate than Maids and Pages...though the trick is still probably "confidence". Knights respect other people's wishes too much for their own good, while silently (or, sometimes, loudly) aware of how that gets in their way; Sylphs live for other people, and "getting in their way" is usually in regards to them trying to decide people's lives for them. Sylphs don't take orders, not really, and even a recognized and reconciled Prince impulse is still going to fire up situationally.

Muses and Rogues are both very different definitions of "passive", but saturated enough in those definitions that it can be hard to know what the tells are. Both classes also run a similar binary of presentation-as-decided-by-trauma: a cheerily self-deprecating worrywort, or a more callous outcast who's become far more situational on who they help, and who they'll accept help from. Ultimately, it comes down to the mechanism, not the palette: Rogues are reactive and (even if not *cynical*) skeptical, where Muses - no matter how soothing or suffocating - speak in absolutes and "ways of the world". A Rogue's world is one where good has to be protected, lest it be snuffed out; a Muse's is very "all will be well, regardless of our actions or petty wants". A Rogue's self image is at best, a concerned friend, and at worst, an ungrateful jerk; Muses either go "hopeless wretch being punished for a sinful life" or "manipulative imperator of judgement" that just sounds pretentious to Tier 2 ears. Sure, Derse Muses wobble with uncertainty, but they wobble between those extremes, wrestling with a brain that will write entire *novels* worth of description in what people are thinking and how much they must hate the Muse and what they TOTALLY meant between the lines of a 2 minute conversation. To reiterate, Muses cannot read minds, but these intricate assumptions are a signature of theirs. Rogues will guess, gossip, worry, and assume like any human being would, but nothing quite so elaborate.

Honestly one of the comparisons I have the trickiest time parsing, if only because it's harder to interpret the surface stuff. You really, really do have to look for action, and sometimes all you've got is that Muses will say they're nothing and Rogues will say they're not sure what they are - again, a Master's certainty.

Muses and Pages might actually make a bit more sense, given that we're talking about attuning to something greater and grander. Given their similarities of hero worship and wounded confidence, you can wind up with some very apt comparisons, even in regards to their unpleasant habits of guilt tripping others as easily (or at least, readily)

as they're guilt tripped themselves. Course, Muses command ideas with the *expectation* they should, and it's not as prideless as they think it is; they're trying to skip the argument (and collapse if they can't), whereas Pages are argumentative little bastards. Toil, effort, glory, and a balance between practicality and dogma is the core dream to chase, which is a pretty hard contrast to Muses who either aren't doing anything or won't admit they are. I mean they're not really chasing dreams anyways - they live in one made for everyone else, and personal wants are indefensible no matter how much they've supposedly "earned" it. It's a sharp contrast to the personal meritocracy of Pages, where the finish line is always glinting in their eyes.

Seers and Muses both don't do very much, focusing on the stories of others with a hands-off approach that's more talk than action - though, both have their own ways of *suggesting* action. Despite this disparate difference in intensity, they do both give off an air of certainty with their speeches and social placement, but there's still things you can track. For one, Seers know where there's gaps in their knowledge, and while they're hesitant to admit it, that means knowing they don't know everything. Just because they "expected" certain outcomes doesn't mean they weren't juggling several other possibilities, and they adapt quickly to new information; being dead wrong is a temporary setback, and they have no pride to lose in admitting that professionally. Muses survive not with moderation, but with esotericism and faith in principle: they're often so poetic and high-minded that it's difficult to argue with them on a practical level, and most aren't *interested* in practicality as is. Isolation helps their dogma go unchallenged, while they're always keen to "what has to be done" and "shared responsibility" or the ever classic "this is what's best for you/your friends". On the occasions they do take direct involvement, most aren't prepared for an argument, with Derse Muses likely to scatter and Prospit Muses more likely to go cold. Self-destruction is consistent, but a half-Witch's sass always either downplays or obfuscates such thoughts - Muses might not want to bother anyone, but their downward spirals are a formal martyrdom.

I know Sapphire from Steven Universe is literally a prophetic oracle, but she doesn't track as a Seer. Doubly so given behind-the-scenes info of who she's supposed to represent, though I've made a point to avoid real people whenever possible.

Witches and Muses are not the same class at all, but they are both capable of playing the same role of "damsel". Helpless, supportive, penitent, peacefully preaching romanticized fatalism; a few twists on Witch habits will drift into what should otherwise be Muse territory. Importantly, the face Witches are putting forward here is still primarily constructed from their Seer side, and while there's certainly

ways to distinguish that (mostly in a cheerful curiosity of question-poking), there's far more in comparing the active impulses. Faux-Muse Witches are trying to put a history - or at least, *capacity* - of troublemaking behind them, which fits to the standard Muse cliché of suppressing selfishness...yet, in both cases, it's never as bottled up as it's advertised to be. Penitent Witches will always have spots and slivers of relapse to their most natural speaking voice: mischievous, playful, free spirited, willfully oblivious to consequences, and maybe-just-a-little-flirty. Even at their most sadistic and grudge filled, there's still plenty of people they have no issue with, where a familiar levity finds itself despite the apparent shame it's garnered. For Muses, this is a different beast: the [REDACTED] inverted impulse is the same cold cruelty we've gone over, and it only knows how to have fun at the expense (or at least exclusion) of *everyone* else. Derse Muses often pull this the most, but both variants will have brief excursions of expressing themselves, suddenly *very* hungry for all that validation and praise they've otherwise avoided. Faux-Witch Muses are very twitchy to anything other than complete and total approval, all while that knife-twisting contempt is completely uncorked. Witches are alot of things, but they're not black or white - crank up the judgement, the preaching, the worldly speeches, and you've still got someone who does their best work without it.

Witches and Lords should seem pretty gosh darned differentiated, but it's still worth acknowledging in relation to Witches who veer off script. Sure, whether **commanding** or **changing**, both classes don't tend to overthink their primary aspect, to the point it becomes synonymous with "what they currently want". Now, while Lords can (and should) take their endless confidence down a notch, that kind of self awareness is unlikely to really tick any Witch boxes. By contrast, overconfident Witches can certainly blur into what this document has sectioned off as "Lord-isms": an off-the-rails chatterbox who believes their brain is incapable of bad ideas, smudging the numbers of their previous exploits to appear more special (if not outright supernatural) while painting a picture of the future full of guarantees they can't keep. Of course, while this is all alot to handle, even these Witches still adhere to their central clichés; while the *tone* might be Lord-like, the *content* of these rants is still of a multifaceted wearer of masks, humbly(?) hedonistic, delighting in how they've bamboozled their friends away from who they "truly are" - even if, frankly, they haven't. Even when it comes to putting the screws on, it's a spite that draws more on their close relation to Thieves, rather than Lord-like harassment and subjugation.

I *want* to say there are two kinds of Witches: the brilliant shining souls who will always find a way to play the same Witch routine while making it their own, and reckless flirts yammering on about magic crystals and ghosts while throwing a tantrum if you don't agree

with their superstition or adultery. The truth (as I've experienced it) is that it can all flit back and forth despite it all; that you can narrow it down to "Personality Class #3 Prospit or Derse" and no further than that. We are, ultimately, capable of change, and I will continue encouraging, if not empathy, at least lucidity. I'm certainly burnt out of smug party girls flirting until they feel like laughing about how much their boyfriend could kick my ass.

There's also something else to mention, and I might as well say it here: Witches and Lords are fucking **magnetized**. You put two of them in the same room, you could come back in a week and they're already dating. Witches take their little alliances seriously, and Lords are a reliable loudmouth who can boss them around in every way they want, while being too ignorant to see their secrets. The self-images they want to keep up feed each other in a dishonest intimacy, making them all the more discontented at the thought of being anything else. Witches may buy the whole "helpless prize" narrative wholesale, which only makes them more susceptible to a Lord who will throw them away for the next piece of ass they see. Course, they might genuinely see the Witch as their one true and only, but if *anyone* is going to fall for their you-don't-know-the-real-me manipulations, it's a Lord, right? That's the thing; even if it's not abusive, even if they're not cheating on each other, it's just their worst traits feeding each other into something...skewed.

Suppose it's pretty trite for a Page to be raving about "why do girls date jerks" like this, right? Look, I got this far on answers cause SpaceWitch trusted me with all the insider knowledge - she had one hell of an ex. I already learned to stop chasing Witches.

Witches and Thieves are a notch off, but it's easy to forget that since Witches don't see a point in openly identifying as an asshole. The thing is, sometimes, they will openly *be* one; toying with people because they can, wearing their cruelest mask, and burning bridges explicitly rather than implicitly. These are engorged states of aforementioned underlying preconceptions: that the colour of their soul is as an aberration, a manipulator, an immutable poison that will let everyone down. It's not often this will be their first foot forward, but it's not never either, and these phases of an individual's projected persona will (ironically) borrow from the Thief toolset. Before we identify the most caustic Witches, we should acknowledge that the line is only blurred from one side; Thieves don't *like* minimizing damage, where even trying to write it off is more "justified retaliations" and not "harmless mischief". Their list of sins is advertised and decorated, even if it's not that bad...which should make you all the more concerned of any Witch who can manage the same output.

This was a fun topic for me and SpaceWitch. She sent me a scene from *Lost in Translation* as homework. I get what she means - Witches off the rails.

So, even if we're not discussing Definitely-Thieves, how do we sort out the Maybe-Thieves muddying the waters? Rude, callous, spiteful, violent, leaning on people while staying all kinds of prickly, what's the tell? The answer isn't to look at the mask (i.e. active impulse) but what's underneath; Witches-Gone-Wild and Bog-Standard-Thieves are not rebelling against the world, but their *perception* of it. Pry past the bluster, and there's either someone flatly ignoring Seer duties, or someone struggling to lash back at Knighthood's demands. Thieves are defined by the double-think of breaking perceived chains while

seeking validation (disapproval counts) of others, often pretty loud on how people “should and shouldn’t react”, always with shades of nervousness towards potential rejection. This breed of Witch is arranging their own active and passive dichotomy in the same fashion, but the perceived rebellion is against polite pretense, and the misfired fulfillment is simply being a more unpleasant example of Seer question-poking. The world is still blameless, it just isn’t beautiful; it’s a mediocre garbage fire not worth getting worked up over, even though it’s still a Seer’s eyes that can articulate that vision. In many ways, this makes Witches more dangerous, where the lack of confidence needed for upkeep (or guilt to stuff down) allows for years of callous curiosity and disinterested drifting. Thieves *break* into Knights, but Witches can easily lose track of where the lines are, tainting future reforms with the idea that “nothing truly changed”. Witches are (still) never as bad as they think they are...but at their worst, all that means is that cruelty like this really was just an excursion, and not “the real me”.

I know there’s Damara, and that’s a great example, but...I’ve heard too many stories from Spacewitch. It stings sometimes. We’re on the same wavelength, but still from different ends. I know the harm she’s done in the past, and I appreciate her telling me, I just...

There’s a Seer of Time in her. There’s a romance for death. Romance for chaos. Romance for suicide - not now, just “eventually, after a long life”. It hurts to hear, especially since it reminds me of my own guilty language in my dark moments - and hey, she shakes *me* out of it, right?

I just can’t say that isn’t fully realizing both sides of herself - I’m using the classpect system to promote healthy lifestyles, but it’s not something that guarantees it, let alone sanctifies my idea of “healthy”. I can’t say for sure 100% there’s a better version of her out there, that wouldn’t think those things. I can’t say I’m not selfish for wanting her to stick around. There just isn’t a damn thing I can do to stop her. A lot of the time, that’s kinda beautiful. Maybe this is too, from a certain angle, but I’m not in a hurry to get there.

Thieves and Pages are both trying to “fix” themselves into bigger people, hoping to support their friends as much as seize power - even then, both classes feel squeamish if they’re in charge of more than they personally feel they deserve. Now the obvious thing to look for is one constantly stepping on toes for sport, and the other trying desperately to make everyone happy - which bizarrely makes Thieves the more trustworthy ones. They have trouble sitting on secrets, and love to be the first one to make reveals, including “I screwed you over, watcha’ gonna’ do about it?”. Pages are the long-term deceivers, and when their Rogue impulse is as bent as it gets, they can be very dangerous. They’ll encourage everyone to underestimate them, displace their intent through “mutually-beneficial-agreements”, and screw over whoever they can justify...which, isn’t actually everyone. Malevolent Pages can only imitate the impression of true ruthlessness; their half-and-half lucidity makes them great schemers, but sickened by their own hypocrisies. Stretching the truth only

highlights they'd rather not lie at all, and pretending to help easily trips into *actually* helping, even if they thought - or hoped - they were too far gone. This isn't to say some "heart of gold" redeems their actions, only to address the lack of commitment from someone who still has more in common with Maids than Thieves. In fact, if Pages are imitating not the *reputation* of Thieves, but the *attitude*, they're probably doing a helluva' lot better for themselves in terms of confidence, competency, and contentedness. At that point, the tell is a habit of angrily telling people "You're doing a horrible job trying to hurt me, what you should really do is [completely genuine instructions on how to hurt the Page]" - which certainly identifies the "Servant" class.

Saul Goodman from Breaking Bad/BCS is probably the best example of a scheming Page, and Moxie of Helluva Boss is a good example of "snarky but meaning well". Forgive me if the true north of self-interest in my Pagey heart makes me a bit hesitant to go any further on awful shit I've done, and sincerely hope to do less of.

Rogues and Thieves are the paired outlaw classes, but that isn't always obvious. Thieves are - despite whatever particular quirk or gimmick they've latched on to - consistent, at least in terms of competitive antagonizing. Of course, the theatre comes first before the substance; while some may legitimately be "bad motherfuckers", there's far more grocery clerks and programmers who chase that same aggressive bravado. Rogues show more variance in their presentation, making those in comfortable situations do little to ever draw attention to themselves, voicing their compassion and complaints infrequently. In short, if Rogues are going to *act* dangerous, it's usually because they *are* - or, more specifically, 'have to be'. Harsh conditions can create some bonafide survivalists who won't shy from violence, and hold a more mocking edge to their jokes and deflections. This prickly attitude certainly creates a mirror to Thieves (and arguably, is as far from Page-isms as possible), but telling the two apart is surprisingly simple: ambition. No matter what circumstances a Rogue is placed in, no matter who they piss off or fuck over, they *still* can't put themselves first; the wrongs to be righted must be to others more than anything, and while some personal vendettas might be rationalized, they certainly won't pursue profit or vanity. Thieves are ~~attention-whores~~ prideful, and no matter who they help, their personal narratives revolve around *their* special circumstances and *their* special talents. Rough Rogues still don't like drawing attention to themselves, and won't mind letting other people take the pedestal. Beyond that, if you do manage to get close enough to them (even if they explicitly said you shouldn't bother trying), there's still cracks in their armor where they'll trip up into more established Rogue awkward kindness.

The Rogues I'm describing here are...not, really the type you meet playing video games. They're certainly IN quite a few videogames, but how much is oversaturated stereotype? If I hear about the genuine article, it's in second or thirdhand accounts; the most immediate taste is in the Rogues I know, who certainly know who they might be (or *want* to be) if circumstances were different. They know what it looks like, to see their principles put to a test where there is no room to apologize, shuffle, or avoid confrontation. There is a violent purity to a Rogue who is still programmed to skew morality in the name of close friends they empathize with, showing cruelty to the injustices they know personally; to wear the shades of gray on their sleeve, with all the guilt that comes with it. They're malleable, after all, knowing that someone else's story would see them the villain. The rough edges solidify their self-perception as someone not worth fighting for, leaving them flummoxed when someone does. What do you do with that? Why would people treat you kindly if they're not expecting anything in return? Push past all the barriers, and you might've sated the buried Page impulse looking for someone to prove their worth with something concrete - but doing so still puts them at a disadvantage, because you're giving them so much kindness which they don't feel like *they* deserve. The moral framework wobbles under pressure, and puts them off center in a way that's just so goddamn endearing.

Grace from Infinity Train for sure, though while I've been more confident on other examples before, I'm less sure now. Rogues are malleable, blurring with other classes too easy, while "Rogue" is, itself, a class name that comes close to being a compliment...

Rogues and Pages are an inversion with some of the most bleedover, certainly in regards to polite yet pervasive negative self-talk. Pages spend far more time than they'd like scared away from who they want to be (read: the Page impulse itself), and fall back on the compromises and appeasement of the Rogue impulse. Rogues, when not as rugged as we described in the "**Rogues and Thieves**" section, are prone to awkward-yet-charming theatrics, invoking their Page side with twice the undermining. This can lead to a misunderstanding of what "Pageisms" and "Rogueisms" even are, but sorting the two ultimately isn't that difficult. Pages do (hopefully) genuinely care for their friends, but they are *never* unaware of the gnawing pull to zealous superstardom; it is a higher priority for them, where even suppressing it is a fairly obvious struggle they can't keep up forever. Just as well, while Rogues might understand "you should take care of yourself/talk back to people" in a clinical sense, it's often a foreign concept in practice, to which they are in no rush to figure out. Both classes remain in such routine internal friction that they can rationalize either impulse as the problem, or even both simultaneously...but you don't have to look too hard for which one is the lesser evil, and the more palatable poison. Rogues with cheery theatrics usually phrase it as a sort of martyrdom, pridelessly avoiding profit, and only trying to cheer people up. Just as well, for as much quiet listening and gentle consolations Pages are *capable* of, they will always *prefer* sharing personal talents and stories, trying to be someone competent and successful enough to have more to share. The spotlight terrifies them both, but as said before, they can both grow enough to realize there's a balance in facing it or fleeing it.

Thieves and Lords can both be sadistic assholes, but that isn't a class itself, is it? Dersites blur the line the most, and Prospits might

have similar excuses, but it's not as complicated as it might seem. Lords posture themselves with a sense of belonging, and anyone they step on either A) Deserved it, or B) Has no sense of humor to funny jokes that could easily be considered assault. It's not like Thieves won't engage in this kind of abuse, try to play it off or justify it, but...we've established what's going through their heads. While they both may see their behavior as a response to traumatic childhoods, Thieves came out with a piece missing, and Lords decided they were the universe's missing piece. Unworthiness is a hard contrast to unwarranted worthiness, and the dichotomy of the Thief/Knight conflict has nothing to do with how Lords interact with the world, and what keeps them up at night - if anything.

My brain won't stop imagining Biff Tannen as I write this.

Lords and Bards don't have much overlap as Prospits, but Derse ones have similar methods. Both will be loud and willfully irritating (mostly in their youth), but try to isolate Lords in both anger and initiative: Derse Bards are, even as pariahs, a passive class. They orient themselves around others, preferring to needle them with no rush in what they bring to the table. Lords are loud and clear in how they see the world and what they stand for, even with rudeness and detachment; Derse Lords might play along for a bit, but they won't turn down an opportunity to show strength and snap back at critics. Lords have a strong center, but it's at the forefront of their thoughts, demanding certain conditions and boundries (and routinely straight up lying). A Bard's neglected Maid instincts are still dutifully resilient despite hiding in the back of their head, making for thick skin that doesn't sacrifice flexibility. Like a seal. Or something.

If you're watching a movie and there's the leader bully with the sidekick bully who goes "Yeah, what he said!", you're probably looking at a Derse Lord/Derse Bard partnership. I've seen it in practice once, though most Lords I grew up with worked alone.

Knights and Rogues are rivals as Tier 2 passive classes; devout to others, but sometimes clinically if their heart isn't in it, all with a coherent inversion tugging at them to break away and look after themselves. Put on a brave face, punch someone's shoulder, crack some jokes, be just a *little* annoying...and if its too much, and they cross the line again when you asked them to stop, *that* is certainly a Knight - or, rather, a Thief. While the matched intensity makes the disparity of their worldview similar, the internal logic does not match: Rogues hold the same social decorum of Pages, and are personally obligated to never take up too much of someone's time, often doubling back on comments before anyone asks them to (even if, you know, they weren't going to). The precise internal dialogue Knights have with their Thief side is complicated, but still not hard to recognize: step on everyone's toes, tell them to chill out, keep refusing to update

them on all the “fun surprises” planned. The Knight half is just the one that actually *does* want to help friends calm down, and make sure those “fun surprises” actually are fun - but, you know, if that’s not appreciated, the snapback is low-blow “not worth the effort” insults. Rogues are as rude as Pages: either quietly behind your back with all the guilt sitting on their tongue, or proud and righteous to your fucking face in moral uproar. That’s the thing when all the selfish and personal feelings are on the whole “diligent and hardworking servant” end of it: no low-blows, go straight for the heart.

Witches and Sylphs may occasionally meet the same surface traits of “cheery, but snippy”. Sylphs have a lot of energy even when they’re trying to be there for everyone else, and a Witch’s wandering downplays their signature as an active class. So they might both start group projects, or get really excited out of nowhere, and nurse a noticable but not prioritized collection of sour thoughts about themselves. Stress test it: Witches wander away if the heat goes up, but Sylphs always dig in and show the Princey side to any kind of challenge waved in their face (real or imagined). Witches don’t have a damn thing to prove to anyone, and that makes sociability a choice and not a directive.

If a Witch pouts and whines, it’s part of a bit. If a Sylph does, they’re legitimately immature and have a terrible ability to negotiate.

Knights and Lords have fundamentally incongruent DNA, but a lot of surface details that match: propping people up, intense bravado, hard work, bitter to people who don’t want their help, etc. While the sense of hierarchy is a good sign, it’s not universal: “defused” Lords get better and better at putting others first without needing to prove their ego (which was never going to fade away anyways), while Knights can twist their bravado into an *alarming* amount of aggressive boasting. I mean Knights just want to help their friends with stability and success, and achieving that via verbal harassment is a natural (but not stable) synthesis of the Thief/Knight impulses. Of course, this still differs from a Lord’s bravado, where schisms stem from a Lord’s endlessly reassured state of being versus the rest of the world; Faux-Lord Knights are prickly, competitive, and very aware the world does not revolve around them. Just as well, Faux-Knight Lords only laugh at themselves in ways they agree to, or from someone they have a huge amount of trust in - which might be no one, or subject to change at whim. Both can languish, but Knights tend to attack the root of themselves, where even reasonable Lords veer to scapegoats and excuses; they’re never in a hurry to say *they* were the deciding failure, where a half-Thief is still too eager to take blame. At their signature level of volume, Lords try to know someone better than they know themselves (which is to say, overpower and overwrite the wills of

others), but while Knights can have romanticized images of friends, they need those preconceptions to be *static* so they can hold on to them. The problem with Knights is needless sacrifice, and the problem with Lords is that they haven't actually sacrificed anything in the first place.

Karkat was loud, but Karkat was also Karkat - there is no one he hated more than himself, and that was not a well-kept secret. Dave was drawing from a different source, but, I've known Derse Knights who up the bravado to dangerous levels. They still hate themselves, it's just slightly harder to tell.

You know, Chai from Hi-Fi Rush might be good to bring up here, where his antics could be compared to Knight-like class clownery. The snag is that Knights only get that annoying if they want you to hate them, because their self-hatred screams they deserve that infamy. Chai, however, genuinely thinks he's hilarious, that the people he mocks aren't worth his time, and is only *barely* compliant with their well being so long as it furthers his own survival or his egomania. He does wise up by the end, but never steps outside the script of a Prospit Lord, for good or ill.

...I did *like* Chai (by the end), but a fictional Lord can be written to grow empathy and self-awareness at the stroke of a pen. Not only that, but his T-for-Teen misfit cartoon world has no place for any of the more aggression and sexual harassment real Lords indulge in. All the sharp edges are sanded off, and I can't fault them for that...just, wax wistful on how hard it is to find real Lords you don't have to watch your back around.

Knights and Pages are paired, but both can be wound up so tight that you might not be sure if they're a lowballing Page holding back potential, or a *particularly* dysfunctional Knight who's failing to keep their armor up. Both will idolize people, but Pages often do so while taking notes, seeing traits they wish they had and encouraging advice they should probably take themselves; Knights often don't *want* the praise they give other people, "serving" without "belonging". Personal gripes always go through the active component first after all, regardless of what class we're talking about - and despite *being* an active class, Pages frequently flounder when it comes to confrontation. At their lowest, other people will set a Page's own rules to life for them, making them punching bags and human footstools. At middling confidence they have outbursts and breaking points, which they often aren't sure how to (or if they *should*) justify; frequently tiptoeing around subjects, or trying to avoid people. A confident (or overconfident) Page will have the guts to tell people off, but it remains within a moral framework of cause/effect, crossed boundaries, and karma. Doesn't matter if it makes sense or not, it still requires active upkeep for the Page not to collapse into old habits. A Knight's temper is far more wild, far more rude. Ultimately, you're trying to distinguish unapologetically self-centered, and overapologetically self-centered.

Both can wind up as "nice guys", if you're wondering. Hopefully it's just a phase.

Knights and Bards both blur loyalty with obstinance, especially in the case of Derse variants. Even Knights can be fickle about when a

situation is actually serious, holding off their solemn-protector shtick to misfire the Thief impulse into blind harassment with no pride or profit. They can employ the same Thief habit of downplaying transgressions as “Not actually a big deal the more I think about it”, which rhymes with a Bard’s invented excuses as soon as they’re called out on something. Of course, Knights aim this more in “You aren’t supposed to be mad”, calling attention to their static ideas of people, law, and their role as the outsider, where Bards are very content with their place in the universe - so long as it’s in earshot. Failing that, Knights being pissed off is the same spite and persecution we’ve gone over, where a Bard showing temper is...a very different animal. As rare as it is to happen, a properly riled up Bard swings wild at the world and the people who don’t see it all *clearly*, pushing their long postponed revolution as something that Needs To Happen Now Or So Fucking Help Me. Knights might burn bridges, but Bards will nuke the ground they’re standing on if the call for a defiant statement to shock society has overtaken them. Expect a half apology that leaves the door open to go wild again someday, compared to a Knight’s flat answers of “I’m a failure” or “Fuck you guys”.

Like I said, I’ve seen some shit, and it keeps Gamzee in perspective. Also like I said, Bards in starring roles are hard to find...but it’s hard to play the detective in Disco Elysium as anything else. Spacebound, as I figure.

Pages and Bards do have alot of internal similarities, in their wistful ambitions and chronic doubts, but they respond with decidedly different masks: the guilty failure, and the buffoonish philosopher. While Pages are always workshopping themselves, these iterations never really see a *point* in deliberate offense and meandering, which makes this a one-sided discrepancy. In the short term, Bards may break into extreme penitence, apologies and self-hatred - but this is still short-term, and while acknowledging very honest self-doubts is important, they are still Bards. Sometimes however, under specific circumstances, Bards have nothing else to fall back on: sometimes, Bards are not clowns at all. The shit-eating grin of “Maybe I have a point, maybe I don’t” is only a persona that *compliments* the class impulse, and it can all fail to manifest in any meaningful way, leaving Bards nakedly honest: always confused, difficulty committing to what they say, not trying to piss people off but genuinely terrible at keeping their mouth shut, very loyal to their friends, and aware of how their wildest passions remain out of reach. Parts of this will ring true to Pages, but the eternal foot-in-mouth stream of consciousness is a Bard staple, even if this variant is clearly aware of how few favours its doing them. It is reflexive to doubt others, to cast judgement, to assume someone is wrong or lying, and the lack of clown-confidence only results in a repetitive sentiment of “Whatever, I don’t know, get off my back, I’m just stupid”. Perhaps more than Pages, its clearer

how this Bard variant really is the other half of Maids: their difficulty co-existing with everyone, their argumentative nature, their wildest dreams and assurances that they have to do it themselves, it's all so much *clearer*. Clownhood seduces Bards in the ability to sate their primary impulse and give an aura of charm, but the ability to exist without it only highlights the limitations.

Media examples here are sparing, but F is for Family's Kevin is right on the money. More plainly, I happen to know one. He is young, which probably plays a part in it; perhaps the great calling of mirth and marijuana is inevitable, but I still appreciate the fleeting window to what makes him tick. Helps throw the other Bards in my life off their game.

Bards and Heirs have one specific area of overlap, and it pertains only to very specific Heirs and very specific Prospit Bards; Derse Bards aren't even in the running on this one. It's Prospit Bards alone who can lead with action, carrying themselves with resilience and dignity - if still decidedly "aloof". This alone matches on to an equally specific iteration of Heirs (ironically mostly Derse, but not exclusively) who are fatigued with their primary mask, but not swearing off sociability. As such, the two notches of intensity that separate the two classes become harder to parse, both resulting in a self-assured individual in no rush with what they bring to the table...but this is only the *surface* details. The actual internal mechanics haven't changed, not past **change** and **destroy** - or, more specifically, small interventions and sweeping overhauls. Heirs in this state will remiss on the elusive big picture, but their resignation is *to* that picture; it is the oft-ignored sum of their concerned suggestions, and not much has changed in their reluctance to "own" it. Likewise, while this brand of Bard is more capable and matter-of-fact, their most competent moments are the "doing-my-own-thing" Maid-isms; *their* aspect still isn't fitting into place, still struggles to make sense to them, where the big picture is easier compared to the steps there. These Bards are just spitballing less with others, and these Heirs are just deliberately ignoring their reliable instincts; not a wildcard, but a facecard flipped over.

LifeHeir and I are not agreed on the classification of Spike from Cowboy Bebop.

Pages and Lords have a very disparate median in terms of attitude, but they both want fundamentally the same thing: to live in accordance with virtue, to rally virtue under their voice (implicitly or explicitly), and to personally exhibit those virtues in a way that helps people and makes themselves feel special. Hell, narrow down sway and aspect, and they usually want strikingly similar attributes and accolades - but that can lead to the trap of differentiating the two between wanting and having. To express doubts that you're up to the task of your own self-image, to shy away or outright resign from it, to

intentionally invoke it as theatre because you can't wholly believe it, none of these are *exclusive* to Pages; and likewise, the delusions of grandeur, the dogmatic impulses or righteous tantrums, are not exclusive to Lords either. While Maids are the actual middle point between them, Pages and Lords generally share more common ground (read: born male and raised with those often toxic expectations), coaxing them into competitions around glory, sport, social standing, or just someone pretty. Both can be worthy of it as much as not; to truly empathize with those around them and lift them up, or to fake that smile while only seeing people for what they can get out of them - and hey, even that isn't unique to these two anyways. As much as it's important to distinguish the two, it's more important to illustrate that **classes are not innately better or worse than any other class, and none of them define how far we'll reach or how much we'll achieve.** Pages don't "promote" into Lords just because they found themselves, and vice versa; they both just need to grow up, and untangle themselves from the idea of themselves.

We're measuring *intensity*. Hussie already shared his words on who the "most powerful class is", and I hope to pull enough of my weight and make any of that true. Besides, "power" doesn't mean well-intentioned, clever, diplomatic, resourceful, or any of that. You want a charismatic force in the room, a contagious beacon of belief, then yeah, Pages can *eventually, maybe, optionally* be all of that even better than Lords start out as.

Pages are infamous for shame and cowardice, and I can't pretend even a majority of them end up as anything dignified; sometimes "power" is just getting what you want, and they'll just over specialize in self pity. We pay attention, we learn what works...Lords, do that less, and are even less prone to admit they're playing angles opportunistically. They've also got a bad habit of just blaming things around them when life gets more complicated than something they're not immediately good at, and even overcoming that still means they won't reach further if they already have what they want. Lords never run out of fuel, Pages have moments where they'll burn hotter than anything, and anything else I say is too tainted by all my own conniptions from the jackasses I grew up with - and, at times, the jackass I was. If nothing else, I was a real creep.

Pages and Lords are natural born enemies, really. I mean, one defaults to seeing themselves stuck in an unwinnable race, and the other thinks they're entitled to every gold medal they see - neither has to be familiar with the classpect system to know, on some primal level, they're in the same competition. The self-aggrandizing alpha male, the self-critical beta male, usually fighting over the same girl - and believe me, masculinity almost always plays a part. You know how long it took me to figure myself out because of this bullshit? Lords lord their laurels, and that'll always incite a Page who's been trying their whole life to *earn* the right to gloat. It's invalidating to work so hard for permission to be oneself, and watch as the bullies get everything from luck or being too stupid to notice their failures...but, if Pages aren't careful, they learn the wrong lessons from it. They modulate themselves less, cheat more, chase girls (or whoever) they objectify into social credit, and become everything they hated just because they thought that's how you win. They do it without losing sight of how the world works, of what the world looks like outside their bubble, and that makes them *very* good manipulators.

Pages are more powerful than Lords. We can be so, so much worse.

"Potential" is evident in Pages even from those who don't know the designation; that in their interests and tangents and accommodations, there's the aspiration of who they want to be and what they'd bring to the world. To realize any of this however, is wholly unique to each

individual; from the conniptions that made them, to the opportunities present in their circumstances (read: wage-bracket), and all the many compromises they'll accept or refuse along the way. To match (or even *exceed*) a Lord's volume is, however impressive, ultimately an entirely optional permutation; it also requires the highest upkeep of reassurance to keep going, making it surprisingly situational. The proudest boasts, the biggest promises, the most unflinching sympathies, the longest stretches without self-deprecation, all of it is still conscious theatre from someone who doesn't believe all their hype - who never could. Pages may stop being cowards, but it's just about impossible to stop being a worrywart over all the little details, especially since that overthinking didn't really feel like the problem in the first place; to Pages, it is not just clever, but *noble*, to acknowledge the nuance and complexity of life. It is at their worst that those nuances are away from prying eyes, but even those manipulations are prone to *appear* like reasonable observations and actions - because hey, there's good people on both sides, not here to make anything personal, ready to back off if there's a good enough argument. It's a good grift - and, sometimes, the genuine convictions of someone who won't back down, and has spent their whole life trying to find reasons not to. Whether they're right or not is besides the point; a Lord-like Page, no matter how self-righteous, boisterous. motivated, tempermental, hypocritical, abusive, or whatever else, is still a Page from the *mechanism* of their thought, and not the results of it.

Deku from Macademia is a great example of a Page, sure. If you're not paying attention, you might miss that All-Might is one too.

I have more than I would like to admit in common with Caliborn, to the point of scaring myself with what I take pride in. Sometimes, it feels like that'd just be where I'd end up, if my childhood traumas were a little different and encouraged me to trust myself more. I have other people in place to keep me in check when I go too far, and I know I will sometimes. I know I have before, and I know that anything I do won't take it back. Every Page has a skeleton in their closet; something they can't make themselves the victim for, something they can't share. You have to acknowledge it if you want to do anything positive with yourself, otherwise you get increasingly used to lying to yourself in a loop of self-pity. I am still fine tuning all of this - both in advice for others, and how I carry myself - but I'm certainly feeling more on top of things these days. I am more openly cruel, more callous, less accomodating...but I do feel like more of myself. I care about my friends, I want them to be happy, that's a part of me too, sure - but Time is Time, and Pages are Pages. Looking too much for choices or palletability only damages the purity of the hellfire - of feeling comfortable in my own skin. I don't need anyone's approval on that. Never did. Wouldn't hurt. But it's not going to slow me down.

So what about Lords looking Pagey? Sure, the inner dynamics are the same: serve your gut, mythmake the past, help your friends, cry when life gets too hard. It's important not to see pity-parties as exclusive to Pages; both classes have the strain of trying to sustain their position through theatre and deeds, times where nothing short of a bullet will stop them from flying that flag. and times where all they have left is to wax sorrowful over all they aren't (and the things they don't have).

Some Lords will even lead with this; far from their default confidence, instead secure in their own insecurity. It can make them kinder, maybe gentle...but not really *quiet*. Lords are a Tier 4 absolute, whether braggart or victim, people-pleaser or couldn't-care-less. Sure, Lords can stampede through arguments, but they can also aggressively agree without fully understanding. Both of these conclusions stem from something past intelligence: the notion that the details don't *matter*. They can go on about their shortcomings, but still with the cliché of not giving anyone else room to speak for 30 minutes. Put others first, play the underdog, cry at your failures, but all too *fast*, too *unearned*, too *impulsive* - Pages have rules, and Lords have intuition. Even aspect-wise, pay attention to *the complete exclusion of the opposed one* in their speeches. Again, Pages are built on compromise: the wavering, the hesitation, all refined and incorporated into caution and patience as their "ideal self". Lords can claim to have these things, but they will, 9 times out of 10, conclude it immediately because it was the ""right"" answer...and those remaining few, who really did learn their lesson, still have those instincts, and all the scars of when they listened to it wholesale. A Lord can *choose* not to believe their own hype, but it never stops being an option.

A useful fiction is the trope of manchildren who inherit too much money and praise from their parents, running wild with it but crying when daddy won't bail them out from the consequences of their actions. There's truth in that, and I've met Lords who play that shtick regardless of how well-off they are or aren't - but hey, ask them, and I'm *sure* they'll attest it's right around the corner.

More recently I met someone who introduced themselves to me as a Page of Hope...and they were not a Page. Helped give me more to work with here - and incentive to make it more diplomatic, knowing they might read it.

Mages and Lords are two ends of the line on "believing in myself", and despite representing opposite intensity, it should be pretty obvious that *both* are (relatively) unshakeable in their conclusions on who they are and what they should do. Now Mages actually resembling Lords doesn't really track, as no matter how uppity or egocentric they might find themselves, it's far more difficult for them to act recklessly; they know the world does not revolve around them, and that nothing is guaranteed from hasty decisions. This lucidity is, in truth, the fundamental product of the intensity: how much is the self *owed* to influence? How much is *comfortable*? At a default, Mages will take to isolation, and Lords will take to spotlights (and violence (and poor business decisions (and vices))), but it's not entirely uncommon to find Lords who find comfort in a more modest approach. However they arrived there, Faux-Mage Lords have enough patience to not follow their every impulse and assumption, with the self-awareness to admit that they are generally an asshole - and that that is okay. This honesty is a healthy development for any Lord, but that

doesn't guarantee empathy; a stoic attitude may just become another tool to dismiss complaints and warp perceptions, all from someone whose newfound clarity has not *removed* a fundamental belief that the universe ought to match their wants. Maybe they've found wisdom in how poor their odds are, and questioning the worth of it all if they had it...but if you still can't tell Mages and Lords apart from the sheer *scale* of these philosophies, Failing all that, Lords are the ones who still have the most difficulty in regards to respecting personal space.

Hussie was right on a lot of things, but what's all this bullshit about Lords being "the most active of active classes"? The hell does that translate to? The implications of hierarchy that put on every other class put fuel on the fire of people picking classes for themselves based on what sounds "sexy". Fact is, Mages and Lords will both promise to work their entire lives on projects. Lords are more prone to quit, but don't mind rallying large groups of people - then, you know, stealing credit from them, usually. Pages and Maids have middle ground that muddles anything absolute. "Power", apparently, according to big cheese Andrew, belongs to idiots like me if we get our shit together. So "active" is...I don't know, the ability to blot out your passive side altogether? Except *no*, as we've gone over, the saturation of the aspect that comes with attunement isn't *more* than the desaturated specificity of adaptation. Lords hide the b-side of their brain, misfire everything, but it's still FUNCTIONING, and I'll illustrate that more clearly in a couple minutes.

There's a lot of truth in this system. Lot more than others, I find. But no truth exists without the opinions of the people sorting it. You can minimize that corrosion, at least, with effort. Ideological cannibal that I am, I think there's an obligation to do so.

Heirs and Lords are beyond comparison from the descriptions given - but, this document is depicting the *mean*, not the *median*, of classes. Quiet humble shoulder-to-cry-on, loud invincible braggart, both are perfectly reasonable ways to sum up the general default manifestations. Still, we are capable of growth, of change, and any number of Lords have any number of reasons to try and embrace the allure of Heir-isms: advice-friend, compassionately argumentative, keeps the mood optimistic, stable sense of self, lets others lead while chiming in to confidently agree (and/or fix a few things). It feels pertinent to mention how commendable this all is - these Lords just avoided a swath of bad habits, measured their instincts fairly to the world around them, and can act as a positive and healthy individual. This is no small feat, and is almost exactly the kind of Lord this document has stressed is possible and desirable...but they aren't Heirs. Hell, if you're not lucky, then they're only faux-Heirs to a few specific people, and you can track down past friends and flames who remember indefensible acts and betrayals of trust. To be a Lord is not a death sentence or punishment, but it is a definable liability of a human personality - we will prioritize those hurt, hurting, and those in danger. They can be good people, but it is so much more work than they often *think* it is.

I have known some eggs. One, particularly, was a very close friend of mine for my first year of high school. Energetic, chummy, supportive, good for brainstorming. Picked me up in my worst moments, let me feel like I had someone in it for the long haul. Had a rough childhood, got a girl teen pregnant, all very mournful things for him to bring up, and I

did my best to keep him steady; he hardly seemed like he needed it, but he appreciated me being there, and I appreciated him.

He's also the one who stole 200\$ from me, and blamed my MindBard friend. Which I believed at the time. When you experience something like that, reconcile something like that, it forever changes your definition of "genuine". I have become a more suspicious person than I care to admit, but I have never met a Lord who hasn't tried to pull stunts on the same level (at least once). I choose to believe, optimistically, that better things are possible. I'm just not going to pretend those aren't slim odds, or offer help in a way that leaves me - or especially anyone reading this - vulnerable.

A Lord imitating an Heir has a few tells. For one, their arguments and corrections are much more common, and often on much smaller concerns that real Heirs would usually let go (but they still have a defined *point*, which is why we're not counting Bards). They're excitable, yes, and they will try to deify "your" accomplishments, but they do so in excess: their assurances are a red carpet, too much for too little, special treatment that isn't fair or earned. Lords are too quick to declare "Fuck 'em" in regards to human conflicts, where the only line is "friends of the Lord" and "everyone else" - which may be concerning for someone wondering how thin that line is. On another note, while Heirs may drop diplomacy and voice complaints on occasion, Lords are significantly more prone to such fits: they blame their tools, blame the rules, or blame the competition when they're not immediately good at something - a common Lord trait, but they're trying to get other people to agree with them now. It makes them difficult to team up with in cooperative efforts, alongside their habit of ignoring orders and following their impulses - you have to work *around* them. Often, words just fail to register, and that goes triple when someone tries to hold them accountable to explicit fuck-ups; denying it is one thing, but there's a common trait of an eerie silence (maybe a grumble), moving on to a new topic, and then reverting to their most comfortable opinions tomorrow. See, these Lords aren't going to ever pull the Mage isolation routine, because **they already are inverted**; a Lord playing Heir is invoking their passive side as far as it goes, and while that's impressive, it can only do so much to bridge the gap. Lords were never a passive class, and while they can be supportive friends, they too often lack the patience to tough through someone else's crisis or handle it with nuance. It's not impossible, but it's effort, not instinct - instincts only a true Heir has.

With all that said (along with everything else this document has stated or implied) Heir instincts are not infallible - only very, very good at appearing so. About as good as Mages are in appearing wise and principled, despite the foundational ingrediants of that image being pride and assumption. Heirs (often Derse ones) may wax concerns that their efforts all feed a need for control, but the truth to both of these is that it is and isn't - it's just the nature of classpects that our capacity to be genuine or frauds is often tied, all produced from the

same central mechanisms. Heir underconfidence is the cost of the Mage impulse being at its bitter, inverted default; that who they are alone, with all the drama and contemplations that comes with, simply won't do as much good as "Mx. Perfect". This document has stressed inversion, but in compromise: that any aimless dependencies in Heirs can be resolved through open and validated inner strength, and that a Mage's fixed delusions can be tempered with empathy and outside opinions. Of course, these are only subjective suggestions, and certainly nothing close to the limit of possibility; Mages can, as mentioned, fly off the handle; too fixated on their cause to see it clearly, too assured of their intuition to trust anything else. This monotonic megalomania is at least limited to what few crusades a Mage commits to, what with their inclination to isolation, and the attrition of justifying the position to themselves (if no one else). It's a different story if those instincts push social, while that fervor can engorge itself in the shade of not needing to be openly - or even consciously - justified.

I haven't watched "The Promised Neverland", but the character of Norman stuck out to me in the secondhand osmosis I got. Seemed like an Heir, in how he went about managing his more outspoken team members. Then, when he grows up, he goes all calculating mastermind, planning a demon genocide the main girl objects to. In the context of the (admittedly, shark-jumping?) story, this is too far, but he won't hear it. And the way he shut her down stuck with me. But I wasn't going to mention it in this document, or write a whole section for "Heirs who look like Lords" cause...that still seemed unlikely. And I had never seen it in reality. I use fictional examples if I can verify them firsthand; that even supervillains can be pointed to if I hear those same justifications and affect from only a jerk. It was just an anime, after all. Plenty of characters can fit to classpects before later writing mutates them into something else, or a chimeric anomaly.

Still. It stuck in my head. For one reason or another.

Faux-Lord Heirs may as well not be called Heirs anymore. Far from the you-got-the-wrong-guy humility, these Magicians believe their performance devoutly...and it's gotten a lot less convincing because of it. Patiently patronizing, charismatically careless, amicably arrogant; for as much as Heirs always think themselves babysitters, it's usually not this obvious they see everyone around them as infants, While still supportive, it can feel (and be) insincere, coddling others while not trusting them with any responsibility. This Heir won't budge on anything they've got personal stake in, marking territory through arguments and dictating the terms for others. They've spent their whole life tiptoeing around people (though likely only **had** to during the childhood that made them Heirs), and this sensation of freedom can give a sense of righteousness that will bulldoze through the concerns of friends who suddenly feel like *they* have to tiptoe now. Maybe there really *isn't* a way to go back to how things used to be, but using Mage gut intuition as "I'm right about everything and never need to investigate and everyone will either come around or can shove off" is *not* the only possible outcome. For what it is though, it's

understandable to confuse them with Lords, but there are still discrepancies. First, they don't cry; Lords fall back on appeals for pity as readily as they boast, but while Heirs might see still themselves as an underdog, they don't need validation-through-waterworks. Two, while they can get pretty rant-worthy on how "amazing their brain is" and all these "great ideas they have", that's the Mage talking - most of their strength, the weight they throw around, is still impersonal greater facts/common knowledge. They are, deep down, still Heirs; being a Tyrant is a choice.

LifeHeir and I aren't talking anymore.

Let me be clear that the above paragraph is not exclusively airing dirty laundry; it is influenced by the tail-end of our friendship, but also from the Heirs I've known first and secondhand (and at least one Mage), correlating those stories and seeing shades of the brewing potentials. Sometimes, I prefer to point to fiction just because it's cleaner than the actual drama it rhymes with. While I won't go over everything that happened between us, I'll say this: guy was absolutely convinced Payday 2 had some invisible statistic that was making the Bulldozer enemy target him, even when he took off the Muscle perk deck. He would not let go of that even when I showed him the Long Guide, while he drew a line in the sand for me being anything but completely on his side. If that sounds like a stupid thing to lose a friendship over, I couldn't agree more.

Like I said all the way back on the inversion page, there's merit in contemplating the double-inverse; in that an Heir's pent-up Mage side can burst out with Lord force, even though it's still a Mage. Lords, again, may be *clumsy* in their selflessness, but they do kind of *aim* it in a more gentle fashion that's reminiscent of Heirs, often moreso than their actual inversion. As is the quirk of classpects, it all makes a wonderful narrative - of would-be rulers fighting for their people. It's why I think "King/Queen" should be seen as an optional class name, marking someone who really is the de-facto figurehead of their particular circle. Lords have the capital (self-assurance), and Heirs have the magic touch (therapist compulsions), but neither are innately - it must be won, it must be chosen, and there's still no guarantee it'll do any good. The Chosen One might seem the clear pick compared to the Baron, but they're both only human. We all are. For good, ill, and the shifting definitions of either.

Sometimes, it feels like the best quality in a leader is not wanting to be one in the first place - that the person on a throne should be someone who never sees it as anything but another chair (which is certainly Heirs at their best). If life is all thrones to you, all status and heirarchy, then it's far too easy to get caught in the trap of thinking the biggest one will sate you...but, if you go at it like that, the smallness follows you. Everyone else, the people looking to you, the people you promised to help, they all look bigger. Louder. Like a threat.

One thing leads to another and you start executing peasants.

DISCREPENCIES CONT: PRINCES (QUIT SQUIRMING)

Princes and literally fucking anything are a major problem. They're constantly trying ("trying") to reinvent themselves, they're inherently oppositional, and they hate people putting words in their mouth...so, we're not off to a great start here. If any of them have made it this far, they've already got some Strong Opinions on everything said; if you know one in your life, trying to broach the subject secondhand will still probably rub them the wrong way. Being a Prince is hard, and hearing that shitty things they've done in the past isn't something they can distance to "younger phases" is

something of an existential terror to them. Claiming to be another class is usually code for wishing they *were* another class, and you know what? You're almost there. It's just easier to break the cliches of Princehood if you know what they are, and can admit when you stumble. It's not all bad you know, you can just be a "Good Prince", there is such a thing...but any hesitation felt to trying is a lot of the reason you don't hear about those, compared to the horror stories.

I know a Prince who fought me years on whether he was one or not; a big problem was I didn't have a firm enough description. No joke, that helped convince me to write this a lot more than I kinda want to admit. Bit selfish, isn't it? I mean "bettering people via conflict and competition" is a valid translation of my classpect, but is it still unbecoming for a Page? Hang on, let me cover my ass...

Princes and Pages hold no related components, but they are both the most outwardly unstable of active classes. They both struggle with who they are, justify cruelty, agonize over their principles, and flirt with absolutes they're nervous to back up. Of course, "apologizing compliance while learning from those they look up to" is *very* situational for Princes, usually only manifesting during teenage years. Pages themselves taking on Prince cliches of being uppity, judgmental elitists is usually something toyed with in adulthood, in the (dubious) conclusion that their ideal self ought to do so. Even without factoring in age, it's important to understand that the damage both classes carry is in completely different areas: beliefs so heavy they crush the spirit, and beliefs too brittle to feed it. A Page's beliefs are rock solid, and their vulnerability comes from not living up to it - which is to say, uppity Pages actually *are* feeling up to snuff. While it's unlikely cruelty isn't revenge from an ex-punching bag, it's equally unlikely that it isn't also (rationalized as) an effective motivator; a Page's central motive never strays from helping others as much as themselves, naked contempt notwithstanding. Princes are hyper-specific and fickle towards whatever they genuinely believe in, with superiority the *usual* method to appease anxiety. Aloof nihilism, professionalism, quoting a million philosophers you never heard of, bombarding arguments with mocking laughter, all of that is optional strategies to hide their vulnerable heart. Faux-Page Princes haven't made it that far yet, or simply never "succeeded" through those means - which can make this innocence liable to flip to cruelty when they smell blood in the water, chasing more traditional Prince superiority. They have far more in common with Thieves, just as Pages have far more in common with Maids and Lords - no class is *inherently* a jackass.

While certain media archetypes match to classpects rather well, "awkward nerd" isn't one of them. You'll have to disentangle some mental stereotypes to sort through them.

Look, just because you're a hopeful dreamer who's weirdly threatened by the people you're trying to help, that doesn't mean your dreams

are inherently worse, or that you need to always shit on them; theatricality, self-deprecation, and rallying cries are only clichés of Pagehood, and not exclusive. Princes will find life far easier if they learn to laugh at themselves, and reach more people by displaying all those little fragile hopes and dreams. Still, while this shows one way to even out a Prince's rough edges, it's an intentional deviation of instinct rather than a default - a Prince has to let off the gas and stop breaking their ideals, where a Page just has to learn to take responsibility and control of their compulsive optimism. This isn't to say Pages can't go off the deep end, but it's certainly a completely different one compared to Princes.

In a perfect world, they'd compliment each other - if a Page ever goes too far, a Prince reels them in. If a Prince is too pessimistic, a Page counters with optimism. The truth is that Pages and Princes are EXCEEDINGLY likely to engage in codependence; Pages are trying to make sense of the world, and might believe someone claiming to have "all the answers". Everytime the Prince falters or feels sullen, the Pages do anything and everything to cheer them up...and anytime the Page starts getting uppity and talking back, Princes put on the pressure, stalling a Page's development. Thieves are the second most likely to try this shit, but they're also not as good at it - even in Homestuck proper, Tavros shook himself loose from Vriska faster than most.

Faster than me, anyways.

Princes and Thieves are separated by a notch - if it were a gradient, we likely wouldn't be talking about it. Now Prospits are pretty easy to parse: even if those Thieves try to be supportive, they're far too curt in the process, and more honest about being self-driven and self-oriented. Thieves gravitate to "look out for number #1" philosophies, after all...but a *Derse* Prince is capable of making the same claim. Self-aggrandizing "team-asshole" is almost the exclusive mask of *Derse* Thieves, so what separates a Prince if they want it? At a surface glance, it's hard to tell; there's a difference in scale, but gloating about being a "survivor" or a "savant" isn't very clear cut. They are responses to their own misfiring inversions, of a world that either restricts or suffocates the "suckers" not smart enough to keep ahead. They will both cave eventually, but sometimes, you don't have time for that.

Really look at Lil' Hal. If you had to *imagine* a *Derse* Thief of Heart, how far off would he be? The sass alone.

There *is* a catch in how they provide alternatives - which is to say, Princes often don't. *Derse* Princes gloat in pessimism, *Prospit* Princes solemnly brood, all while Thieves gleefully fight for glory past all the muck. Princes do a lot to prove they're "above" their aspect, but as we've repeatedly discussed, that's never *quite* true; it's Thieves who take the selfish approach transparently, never tied up in admitting what they belong to and what they take pride in. Princes will want to skew things their way as much as Thieves, but there really is something unique about wanting to blow it to smithereens first - or at

least, saying you are, while sparing what benefits you. Regardless of whether the aspect is written off as “elusive”, “poisonous”, or “volatile”, regardless of whether they’ll say out loud “except to me”, Princes still instinctively engineer a web of complex multi-layered justifications to shy away from what they have to gain, and how truly personal it always was. Remember, this isn’t inevitable predation and evil, this is still just someone very awkward at admitting what they like, and these misdirections are to rig the argument so that no one can take it away from them - because it always *feels* like they will. The bluster, the excuses, the cries for forgiveness, all of it is just drama to avoid the mundane self-sabotage they put themselves (and anyone around them) through. Here’s a straight up fact: Thieves can conditionally share their primary aspect, and so can Princes, even if it’s got alot more conditions. Neither has to exclusively rely on the heavy-handedness of their passive side, as that only hurts their relationships and continues the selfish misfires. Sure, there’s a fun comparison to make of bandits and politicians, and which one will screw you over honestly...but they *both* can do *more* than screw people over.

You will never have to slap a Thief in the face and say “Fine, you don’t like furries and stupid people and easy modes in video games, will you *shut up about it?*”. Princes like punching bags too much. Gets gross in excess - or, at all, depending on the person.

Princes and Knights are identical in the bullet points Princes prefer: trying to help everyone, shoulder burdens, bravado, quiet agendas, pressure to give up, internal feelings of worthlessness. They are, however, two steps removed no matter how you slice it...it’s just that Princes keep trying to narrow those steps. For Prospits, this altruistic attitude is fairly consistant; for Dersites, it’s often what’s left if their swagger and bluster breaks, making it often more a confession rather than a consistent persona - and if it *is* consistent, it’s one that snaps to something else under strain or time. The thing is, they’re still not actual Knights, and not even because their behavior is more conditional; too distant to play lackey, not guilty about liking praise, wanting to socialize but twitchy to slights, managing other people’s lives instead of taking orders, more a caretaker than a servant, thinking they can fix (not just complain about) everyone else’s problems...isn’t this familiar? Some Princes might chalk this up to learning lessons, becoming “wiser” and “more mature” Knights, but there’s a much simpler answer staring them in the face: they’re just depressed Sylphs. Congrats, you discovered inversion.

It’s the most common miscommunication for Princes - you’re allowed to help your friends without deciding its your one and only personality trait. Some of that might be from being double-inverted, but the rest is probably from romance. Hurting yourself to help someone else is...overhyped.

Alright, fine, what's the harm? Inversion's healthy, right? Sure, sure, but not if you don't invert the aspect with it. Princes playing Knights (or, again, depressed-macho-Sylphs) are often still trying to work with their primary aspect, which becomes increasingly fragile after being stretched out as the "universal problem solver" it never was. Princes are stuck accepting only pyrrhic victories in a constant state of stress and unease, rationing out their own carefully approved beliefs which still benefit the Prince whether they realize it or not. On the other hand, a Knight getting uppity and trying to revel in an aspect meant for everyone else is an oil and water situation. Despite pride, Knights think of other people as the exemplars of their aspect, and cannot stabilize the revulsion of pretending otherwise; despite responsibility, Princes will always represent what strengths of their aspect they deem permissible (and those they don't), struggling to admit when it benefits them and struggling more to make it benefit anyone else. Both too often ignore the solutions available until they crack, thinking they've abandoned their principles when they just dusted off the backups. Figure it out, be happy, and don't fetishize your sadness.

Both the Striders sure, but it's more common than you think. *Especially* for Princes.

Princes and Sylphs are the same class, congrats, do you want a cookie? Hopefully, a Prince acting more explicitly like a Sylph should be a mark that *they are a Prince*, but I suppose one may suggest they're a true Sylph with only a Prince inverse. Make no mistake, the line never blurs to the point of being indistinguishable: the world's most proudly self-driven Sylph and the world's most optimistically helpful Prince will, still, always, eternally, young or old, default to their most comfortable state without upkeep. Learn both sides of yourself, invoke as appropriate, but don't get uppity because there is a limit to flattery here - being stuck with these impulses doesn't mean being stuck as all you are, and complaining isn't going to change anything. Get introspective. Reconciling who you are, who you could be, who you want to be, there are only positives there.

There's Derse Princes who can display a very awkward enthusiasm sometimes - I touched on it briefly, but the truth of it is, it's *very* similar to the mannerisms of a Derse Sylph. Prospects on either side seem too wound up with their self-perceptions, but...I dunno. Princes are dorks sometimes, and their best qualities come through the brightest when they are. It just rarely sticks. I hope it can.

Princes and Mages don't have much in common, but limitations in descriptors too easily confuses Mage traits and Prince aspirations. I mean if a Mage accepts their aspect even if it's kind of shit for them, and a Prince breaks down their aspect into fragments, you're kind of left with the same general amount of unsalable information - in theory. In practice, Princes have what they have at the cost of rejecting everything else, making sweeping statements on a multitude of

different topics they're rarely qualified to make. Mages keep it simple (or at least make it sound that way), and sounding profound is usually an accident that was irrelevant to the point they were making - just what works, the quiet truths they trust, with a faith in the greater whole of their aspect even if they can't see it yet. Mages may not expect special treatment, but that's a far cry from expecting famine, and this is to say *nothing* of the defensive and spiteful attitudes Princes are known for. Even stuffing it down makes it worse, since it doesn't take a genius to spot the difference between "someone who doesn't care" and "someone desperately trying to prove to anyone looking how much they don't care". I mean past the surface notes, the truth is Mages care a lot about a couple things, and they don't really hesitate in mentioning it. Are there sore spots? Sure. Maybe. But you have to look for them, and Princes trying to hide theirs only makes it more obvious.

"Magic Scientist" and "Scientist who Fights Magic" can be confusing metaphors to put next to each other, but that's probably why Princes are called Princes - scientist is just a common enough rationalization, in both life and that damned comic, that I personally chose to work it into the prose. Besides, the metaphor is secondary to the brain chemistry.

Follow up: why the hell would a Prince want to be known as a Mage anyways? The Heir impulse of a Mage is often woefully malnourished, and their ability to stand idle to suffering is well documented. Princes have a Sylph inside them that's significantly more difficult to keep quiet, where trying to feign indifference hurts everyone. How much is it really worth to *pretend* you don't care? And how much preventable tragedy will a Mage permit, because they think it the way of the world? Even if they reach out and get burned, even if they're overprotective and stifle others, at least a Prince's guilt compels them to scrutinize their actions - give up most days, but the opportunity to change and learn is present. Mages are not *nearly* as self-critical, and may only redirect themselves as much as is the bare minimum - not what's requested, not what's needed, nowhere close to what's possible. Still, it's ultimately up to both of them, on their own terms, if they want to change. Perhaps all this entry serves is to let others identify the two.

There's a lot of fictional Mages who might lean Princey but are really just the rare variant of Mage that's gone fucking bananas. Aiden Pearce of Watch Dogs is *reviled* by a good chunk of the gaming community, but I remember showing the E3 demon to a lovely friend of mine who responded with "He even walks the same way I do." Having played the game through, I can say he's an excellent example of the worst kind of Mage, to the point I've joked he's the evil version of my friend...who has still seriously considered vigilante activity, to be fair. Mostly a teenage thing for him. But he was serious, at the time, and it never truly went away. We fought about that once. I'm not what stopped him, I'll tell you that.

Princes and Seers run into the same issues as the Mage comparison, but maybe less obviously. Personal adaptation and passive attunement

are a match, but to boil it down to lectures and self destruction misses everything else. Princes are Princes, and avoiding authority is usually because they don't see an opportunity to assert any yet. Seers can be firm, cynical, hurtful, self-sabotaging, driven, but if they *do* have anything to gain then it's rarely anything more drastic than convenience; "getting the word out" isn't just enough, it's ideal. Princes need validation, titles, pats on the back, some sense of superiority, and it still won't stop them from making far too much a competition when it never was, never had to be, and isn't favouring them anyways. Even with all this to the side, Seers are (usually) honest when they're making a guess or need more data; you need to *really* press a Prince for them to stumble into admitting they don't know what they're talking about. which is a firm failure state for them. If they're decently modest, they'll just grumble and quiet down - if they think they've got reputation at stake, they'll flail around and insult people in a desperate effort to not lose ground (which ironically still makes it worse). Really, the crux of this is that when it comes to personal vulnerabilities and pain...well, for Seers, that's all smothered Witchisms getting in the way of their points. For Princes however, those wounds are the point; their personal stories are that of being the spurned iconoclast warring against the tide of ignorance, retaliating with answers and - more importantly - judgement. Being "smart" isn't a class, and neither is being "right"...but being a Prince often means obsessing over such things, to every predictable disaster that ensures.

Rose and Kankri had bite, but it should be clear enough how far they are from Princehood. I've found male Seers to be a bit grumpier, where Witchy-ness seems further from their immediate instincts or self-perception. Then again, that's on this side of the pond; a friend of mine recommended this anime to watch together, and while I can't remember the name, one character fit for Seer with so much more mischief than you'd usually see for a dude. Course, I just don't have the sample pool to really investigate those cultural differences - it's just a character from a show, which may or may not reflect internalized potentials of self-expression.

I CAN say that SpaceWitch has a Seer friend, and that the both of them recognized they had similar brains long before I came around with my pseudo-science. Guy was the usual basket of Seer traits...but, then came out as trans rather recently. According to SpaceWitch, her friend jumped right into Witch mannerisms with enthusiasm (without knowing about this bullshit, mind you), and it's fascinating to me that it all got uncorked so suddenly. I maintain that even the most stern Seers, regardless of gender, will all express a Witch side somewhere somehow...but, it's still a class where all of its most *recognizable* qualities are associated with femininity. I hope, despite my biases to destruction, I'm not out of line to suggest it doesn't have to be, and that we may be better off with new perspectives.

Oh, and don't get me started on Princesses....

Princes and Maids are driven (usually), impatient, and doing their best to fix everything they see as wrong with the world. They're both generally pretty skewed on what's actually in front of them, as besides the pizazz of **creation** and **destruction**, they are ultimately capable of both. While ostensibly more "reasonable" (or at least "dry"), a

Prince's idea of "practicality" is influenced by their Sylph touch, and you can follow that thread in their speeches to notice their heaviest hand only being thrown at *other* people. The clearest cases of this is in abusing authority, as while Maids may be ruthless in a position of power, they can't stop themselves from keeping their hands as busy as possible, still mistrusting others to "get it done right". If a Prince is administrating, expect idle hands between their gloating - and while it will have more smiling rationalizations to justify it, it's worth noting Sylphs are capable of that same taskmaster thrill. Of course, whether we're talking a business, a sports team, or an MMO raid group, we are assuming these two classes at the head of said operation, which is no guarantee. Ultimately, you can boil so much down to Maids being the impulsive one who will bulldoze through you in an argument they don't care to have, while Princes are fatalistic and too caught up trying to make you agree with them or feel stupid for not doing so.

I am keeping my eyes out for an AFAB Princess, or an AMAB Maid (butler?). Princes, however, are not an unbiased source in finding one.

Princes and Bards were already close due to being paired classes, but a Bard's refusal to be classified and a Prince's refusal to be classified as a Prince exasperate the issue into some tricky camouflauge. In both, sway determines alot: Prospit Bards are very unrestrained with rambling questions, but Prospit Princes always take a serious tone shift when they need to make a point (which is often). Derse Bards have an enthusiasm for incessant and politically incorrect sadism, whereas Derse Princes have rules on what can and cannot be said (even if they change to reflect personal vendettas) - in short, Derse Princes will explain why you're wrong for not laughing, whereas Derse Bards don't explain anything and continue with the same joke (which may contain slurs). The Royals both need other people, but Bards don't seem to understand they do, where Princes are terrible at hiding their lonely desperation. A Prince can pretend to be a clown on their terms, but they've got too much fight to be pushed around and ignored like one - even if they try.

Princes and Lords are very disparate in ingredients; **destroying** an aspect with skepticism and **commanding** it as living dogma are almost complete opposites, really. Yet, despite a hundred states of anxiety beforehand, some Princes really do think the best thing they can do is be *louder*, aggressively trying to overpower everything in their way, boldly saying that only they truly know what a valid interpretation of their aspect is (which is still potentially "absolutely nothing"). The two classes have instabilities from different sources, but it can be difficult to tell when there's so much dick-measuring and boasting clogging up the useful data. Now it's the Prospits who irrefutably prove this as two different classes, as the unrestrained

(almost childlike) optimism of those Lords is a stark contrast to the moodier patience of a Prospit Prince. While they may yearn for a Lord bravado, it's a pretty unwieldy mask to wear...but, Derse Princes, as we've established, *love* masks, and they can hurt a lot of people while they do it. If they're your only examples of a Prince, you might be forgiven thinking they're the same class as Lords, but the cracks are everywhere a Prince doesn't want you to look.

"Ruler"! HAH! CALLING YOU OUT CARL JUNG, FUCKING AMATEUR HOUR

Okay yeah, Hussie noticed it first, but it's still fun to laugh at dead old people who are scared of communism. That and whatever Homestuck fan had a see saw where "Princes and Bards" lead into "Lords". Jesus, they modeled the WHOLE THING over "masculine aggression" and "female compassion". That's such a fucking gross oversimplification, and I'm triply pissed off that "Time" is seen as some inherently evil aspect to them. Look, I can't make this any clearer: "toxic masculinity" is not a class.

Let's ignore the rudeness for a second and look internal: a Prince with this much heft is putting all their faith in their destructive impulse, doubling-down on sneering and spite. Their aspect is under their control only by virtue of a violent stranglehold, which means it's a depressing series of conclusions that sound like "No it's impossible and only an idiot would try" and "It's the weakness of all humans and only I am smart enough to see through it, unlike you". Yet, it's the Sylph impulse that's doing the heaviest lifting, giving form and direction to the remaining aspect dwelling in this philosophy, **creating** paths forward for anyone and everyone around them. It's hard to even tell what *doesn't* count as a misfire here, but it's worth noting the catch: Tyrant Princes are still very helpful, involved, and looking to other people for validation. Now usually that's after or during shitting on anyone who tries something (that the Prince didn't suggest), fostering and exploiting dependencies as their only close relationships. It's just pretty noticable that, past all their bluster, they're hugely dependent on an audience, and think the best way to prove that is to do something for them. It's noticable that, past all their constant criticism, they can dish it out but can't take it, always inventing excuses on the spot. They have a few talents they hype up as much as possible, and if you've got something better - let alone *overtake* them - they will throw an honest to god tantrum. Trying to match a Lord's aggression doesn't make them stronger; it only makes them more fragile, terrified, desperate, and broadcasts that to everyone in their radius.

It's not the best that Princes can be. It's just what makes the most sense to them. The most natural. I suppose that's why "Ult-Dirk" is the way he is. It's...accurate.

Lords can be insecure, dismissive, pragmatic, sneaky, and cynical - but to an aspect and identity that is neither primary or active. Whatever chips-on-the-shoulder are processed through the passive side (we'll *get* to that), laying next to the everpresent seduction of "I

am a golden god". This certainty of their place in the universe is difficult to crack - even if it would do a lot of good if it did, at least long enough to consider who they are and what they're asking for. Princes playing Lord just can't keep it going, and that means breaking down most days; quiet, somber moments (often drunk) where they apologize and confess their shame, often to the victims they've bullied (or repeatedly attempted to bully) into intimacy. Lords may have victimhood, but it's as loud and ruthless as the rest of them, and it's usually to back up what they're aiming towards - Princes in tears aren't reinforcing their identity, they're admitting they're frauds. There is shame to bridges they didn't burn, but didn't fix...and Lords just aren't the type for shame. Regret, pain? Sure. Not shame. Even Prospit Princes come close to a realization they're making things worse by overtrusting their instincts, but it's so difficult to get any kind of Prince to do something about it. If they stop acting like a Lord, they'll just reinvent themselves again, but at least that proves they never were one in the first place.

I have (or, had) the pleasure of knowing a Lord of Void. It's interesting finding someone who says "nothing matters" as a good thing, often accompanied by "I also do not matter" (he slid into self-aggrandizing eventually, but for the most part he's suitably defused). I did wind up pushing him a bit too far...I still say he swaggers about too much, faults people for initiating arguments while expecting his statements to go unchallenged. I put on enough pressure to hear him make his points, and they sure as hell weren't enough for me...but, they were enough for him. I've seen Princes argue, and he ain't one. There's "Would fall apart if he was proven wrong in an argument" and "Doesn't realize he's capable of losing an argument".

Things ended up going too far when he was busy trying to claim cancel culture is a problem because his brother had an incident, and there was no other evidence besides that...just a bit of conjecture, but, it didn't really go further than the anecdote. Why would it? He's a Lord. I actually miss the mental gymnastics Princes get into; at least they pivot. There was some other stuff too, but, I shouldn't vent. The purpose of these little slices of my experience is just to articulate particulars of class interactions and cliches. Your own experiences matter more than me, and I hope you all keep a look out - I'll probably make more sense when you're *done* reading this document.

Princes and Heirs are...I mean...like...we're all seeing the obvious storytelling significance here, right? Princes always veer towards an image of a powerful and respected strategist friend-leader, and Heirs are the class that keeps stumbling into that, frequently (though not always) refusing to admit it. It should be a pretty clear tell that Princes like to leave their signature on things, and purposefully trying to avoid that results in the heavy-handed not-quite-martyrdom we discussed in the Knight comparison. Still, Prospit Princes can come close to an Heirs even-handed subtlety if they try their best, and that is worthy of some praise; Derse Princes may have more overlapping ground with the dark path of stern authority that Derse Heirs dance around. In both cases, there's a discussion of the people we grow into, rather than the archetypes we start as, but we're here to have the argument of sorting the two; in the doomed effort to achieve perfection, who is the iconoclast and who the illusionist? With the

descriptions given, Heirs could still see their worst habits in the Prince section, as Princes could see shimmers of who they are in Heirs...but whatever is built stands atop the same fundamentals. In this regard, the easiest way to tell them apart is simply to have known them earlier in life, and seen which traits were displayed better; it gets more complicated if that isn't an option.

Heirs and Princes do share phases: shy and underestimated, broken-soul resignation, over-protective older sibling, and the control freak almost-authority whose cynicism to their aspect vexes their attempts to "get it right". So much of what was said in Faux-Lord Heirs is relevant here, but from someone leaning on ruthlessness more than confidence; Heirs can become transparently argumentative and irritated, with an aspect they no longer truly believe in anymore. They'll push through all the concerns of their friends and family, paranoid to all possible dangers, while nothing is ever quite good enough for them to stop stressing themselves out. Of course, what's going on here is that their twitchy fingers have gone into overdrive: their aspect is in a permanent state of **change**, a burdensome personal obligation of constant maintenance, with perfection eternally elusive. If that sounds smug, you are correct: Heirs will do it "for you", but there's *always* been a pride in assuming no one else is qualified to run their own lives, which is only getting increasingly less quiet. Alongside this infantilizing and undermining, Heirs are still the "sticky" debaters they always were, but they still don't ask for much besides agreement; their concern is that you don't hurt yourself, where your best place is on the sidelines looking pretty. If Heirs actually *lead*, it is by example, but trusting others to keep up with them is trusting them to not have differences of opinion too. The doubts, guilt, and self-loathing can pile up high, but again, Heirs don't cry - only cut their losses, and keep at it. Draw as many myths as you want of the rightful Heir surplanting the bastard Prince, but the fact is, diligence isn't mutually exclusive with being a manipulative asshole - really, it just makes them harder to get rid of.

Originally, I put the DCAU Superman in for Prospit Princes. I no longer maintain that position - certainly not with certainty. It's depressing though; without him, the bar is back to the low standard of Zebruh. I could think of a few other fictions, but, just as likely the writers didn't mentally sort the traits from the two different personalities - which is, by itself, not a requirement for writing good stories with good characters. Sometimes, reality is so much more straightforward.

Perhaps it's a dead horse to reiterate every way Princes will identify themselves through unpleasantness. We should at least not forget where this is all coming from: the Sylph side hyper-exaggerates the outside world, misfired into a cataclysmic quagmire of wrong options, wrong lifestyles, and wrong opinions. Thing is, Princes just aren't "built" to correct the world like Heirs (or even Bards); their primary

aspect is a personal one, eking out happiness outside the influence of the oppressive, unchangeable inverted aspect. The Prince impulse will promote a mask of an individual capable of navigating this minefield, but not one who can actually overcome it - it's the *other* aspect being **destroyed**. Like Thieves, Princes express themselves through subversions and exceptions, rarely actual principles (ironically). They are often tender when saying this honestly - not sneering at refusing to save the world, but imploring their loved ones to "escape" with them, away from the hardship and haters who could never understand. This can be sweet, just as much as it can be a suicide pact (sometimes literally); Princes have always been prone to romanticize spirals and resignations, and this is often the sum of those hypocrisies we've gone over so much. It doesn't *have* to be, but it still won't make this personal aspect any kind of fuel to the fire they want. Those boldest displays of authority - corrupt or otherwise - will always reflect compromises, invocation, or outright acceptance of their inverted aspect...which is to say, it's not really Princes that are leaders, but Sylphs.

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Let's be blunt: it's not fair. None of this is fair. Nobody asks for their classpect, but the dangers in Princes are so much more default than deviation. It's easy to see Heirs as just "better", but that's disregarding more than a little cultural worship of that particular archetype, and those particular traits: selfless, resilient, headstrong, humble. Primarily, Princes are built to reject convention (**destroy**), but if they don't make their own meanings, societal expectations leak in anyways from the Sylph's mythmaking, thus leading to the aforementioned tangle of identity (and there is SO MUCH to say about the heavy feminine coding of Sylphs, and how Heirs represent a facet of the masculine ideal or the default "good guy" of fiction, etc etc). Heirs themselves are often strangled by an eternal crusade to better the world at the cost of themselves. Princes are not that. They are the class of "me and mine", of cutting losses, of salvaging and retiring when cataclysm looms on the horizon...and sometimes, it very much is. Sometimes, Princes are the voice in the room (official leader or not) that really *can* make the hard decisions that the more zealous and dogmatic are ignoring; what really matters is asking themselves if they *want* be that guy. Princes are a lot of things - disappointed perfectionists, contrarian auteurs, resigned hermits - but they are, just like Witches and Thieves before them, themselves. Figuring out who they are and what they stand for is a long process, prone to relapses and collapses, but the less they hinge everything on what other people think about it (good or ill), the more likely they'll find something comfortable. Probably. At the end of

the day, it's their life, and there's only so much a personality document can and should do in regards to changing their mind.

Like I said, calling a class a "King" is just...I don't know, I like to think of it as "resident social groups focal figure and meme". You could do that with any class, you know? These are all just words surrounding people - what actually matters to you?

I like to think that the best version of *any* class is the ability to own up to your own belief structure, recognizing it's an illusion, and arguing it's merit regardless - better than projecting or assuming. Heirs and Princes both avoid that: Heirs barely realize what they're doing, and Princes failing to understand their conceptions aren't universal. One too modest, the other too wound up - hence the names. None of them mean good or evil, and it's futile to waste everything worrying about what is or isn't "ideal".

You know what Princes do that no one else can do? What I truly respect about them? They can hit wildly unexplored parts of their aspect, and express something totally unique, out there, and thought provoking - like a Bard but with scheduling. It's as soon as they stop trying to protect themselves, piss other people off, gaslight others, as soon as you GIVE ALL THAT UP, there's actually a decent conversationalist I like watching movies or creating stories with. I always miss the banter with Princes in my life - and they probably *can* make that their defining feature, if they get the fuck over themselves.

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Okay. We've established what classes are and aren't, in a suitable amount of detail. The totality, the irrefutable, the deviations, the potential, all of it. We set the boundaries well enough to discuss those that (appear to) cross them freely.

One last dance.

HERALDS

(PARADOXES, PLASTICS, PHILLISTINES)

The reason someone can be a "destroyer" for their whole lives is that they can't actually completely remove what they're fighting - or rather, "fix". Remember that Princes and Bards both wish to rewrite these ideologies, and while narrow-minded selfishness is a *hazard*, it can never be allowed absolutely. Their ideological interpretations are highly subjective, at their worst when pretending not to be, but always hold enough malleable uncertainty to be debated in an effort for validation. This, however, is the step past that: no more talking, no more arguments, no more hesitation, just a fixed single point of absolute subjectivity masquerading as absolute objectivity. All the certainty of the Master classes, but a belief adapted almost beyond recognition, and without the will to fight back; **conquered**. No greater belonging, no acceptance, no nuance, no hesitation, only raw rejection at anything that does not meet one's criteria. Of course, what flickers of an aspect remain does not inspire the wielder as much as others; languishing is the most natural outcome, an immovable object to a Master's unstoppable force. To lash back out at the world,

to force it into place, to turn it inside out...what words do you even have to say? What justifies the sovereignty so that only your discontented interpretation is truth? In writing, in manuscript, in decree, there is only dry practicality to shut out the noise; a passion that never appears as such, a logic that never adds up. A message delivered humbly from someone with nothing to gain and no stake in the fight - or so they'll tell you, in the hopes you never know there's even a signature to look for. That cataclysm is already here, that measures must be taken...but even if they realize the words are all theirs, even if empires and crowns are ceded, it was never going to heal the wounds that broke their voice in the first place.

I'm not blindly filling in the blanks with these two. Homestuck accounted for all people. And some don't belong in the world of ideas, according to Hussie apparently.

But they should. And I'll make sure it happens.

HERALDS CONT: IDENTIFICATION

(AMONG US)

The thing about these two is that they're likely to have verbose ideas on who they already are. With everything established thus far, we can at least *try* to establish what they are or aren't, with some grist to the argument. So, with sincerity, please consider the following:

- 1: None of the classes thus far have resonated with you.
- 2: Multiple classes have resonated with you, and the discrepancies section has not helped.
- 3: A class has resonated with you, but only in certain sections (this is doubly important if you don't see yourself in the unhealthy "ugly sides").
 - 3a: You would argue the reason you only resonate with certain sections is you "matured", "grew out of it", or otherwise permanently silenced selective, chronic, lifelong habits.
- 4: You were already 100% sure about your classpect due to a prior experience with the Homestuck fandom, but none of this matches.
 - 4a: You were already 100% sure about your classpect, but have changed it now/recently to something else that you are 100% sure about.
 - 4b: The new classpect you are 100% sure about doesn't match the behaviors here either.
 - 4c: The classes described below DO resonate with you, give you pause for thought, but you rationalize it away as momentary doubts in 30 seconds.
- 5: Assuming you don't have a class.
- 6: Reading the following descriptions for these two classes, or this section, and claiming "Everybody thinks like that".

6a: The idea that everyone does not, in fact, think like that, is existentially terrifying.

If enough of these sound familiar, you're probably one of the classes here. If you are, but still don't agree with it, we can at least describe them well enough so that outsiders can recognize them. With all this in mind, let's get this show on the road.

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PRIESTS are individuals born into an eternal Tabula Rasa, constantly shifting their moral code and behaviors from year to year, social group to social group. They have a great listless boredom, leaving them prone to low energy and inaction. While this often leaves them attaching their self-worth to small talents, gimmicks, catchphrases, and other petty concerns ("Just let me have this."), it's not a rule; they're prone to wild and sudden creative sparks, ready to commit their lives to a new career, hobby, lifestyle, project, or even *people*. Too often, these are fleeting curiosities at something "new and exciting", which fail to make it past the blueprint stage; rarely accountable to these promises, Priests are prone to dismiss away embarrassments (or transgressions) as readily as anything that fails to interest them in the first place. Often the most content Priests are the ones who float between idle passions, riding the waves of their wandering fascinations without taking it too seriously, simply enjoying the company of their friends. For those that wax spiteful over making it in the history books, there is the rare iteration that has enough intelligence, intrepidity, or inheritance to chase those wants - but they're never gonna catch them. All it does it make them lose sight of what actually matters, and what they already have.

I'm about to make a lot of claims. Custom classes are usually the sign of a Homestuck fan who's more interested in dumb fun than assuming there's merit to Hussie's system - and it's pretty obvious I think there's merit. More than that, I'm quite certain there *is* an example of this class existing in the comic...in fact, you could argue it's the *only* one.

"Priest" is what I came to eventually. "Lich" was considered, but felt too accusing, too demeaning. "Serf", for their lack, but that's just got no flair, and doesn't resonate with the whole of it. "King" only really works for the truly power-mad, and it's increasingly unstable given the surprising amount of queer people who qualify...abuse and negligence seem a commonality in their childhoods, so it shouldn't be a surprise that those are the voices that go unheard the longest. Still, "King"...Hussie did leave that spot open, technically. I've made my thoughts clear, but you gotta wonder what they thought - and believe me, they know.

Priests often feel like an insignificant witness, a conduit or beacon to the beauty of the world around them - yet, this isn't their focus. They're not that *content* being insignificant, and most take in the light of what's around them in order to reflect it in whichever direction they want. Now, a Prince's aspect is more of a weird abusive

relationship, where their constant complaints speak to an unresolved schism, and boasts about being “over it” are a bluff. The better metaphor for Priests is that their aspect is buried in an unmarked grave on the other side of town, and has remained there for years undisturbed - it’s just not dead. Their aspect is personally **conquered**, wholly adapted to the whims, ideals, and comforts of their life alone - and yet, often so buried the Priest themselves can lose track of these motives, or feel the world would reject them for it, making they themselves **conquered** by that aspect. This dance of extremes is what makes Priests the most *slippery* class there is, as they can effectively “opt-out” of their aspect’s most recognizable qualities. It’s still *there*, it’s still bound, but whatever bubbles at the deep depths of their psyche is easily overshadowed by pop culture, ancient philosophy, pure flippancy, all more likely to resemble the inverted aspect (if anything). Dig deep enough, and the Priest impulse is often attached to a lot of ugly: sudden bursts of anger, obsessive longings, simmering resentments, all surrounding a catalytic sore spot. Really, that’s what a Priest’s aspect is: their pain, their want, and still the salve to fix it all if they find *their* way to embrace it. It’s not going to work the more they want *other* people as idols, or audience, or scapegoats.

“Adaptation” really does translate to “Destruction” sometimes, but I’m not sure Priests are that happy in discontent, you know? Look, Time’s my wheelhouse, but I’m a Page born and bred - hyping up reality, the IDEA of reality, is my own delusion, and I’ve got a Rogue of Space in the back of my head to fill the gaps. Course, if Time’s destruction, and Princes are destroyers, ain’t it redundant? Now, an actual Prince of Time is...technically Kanaya, following inversions. I have to imagine Hussie agreed since her turning into a vampire is a pretty clear example of rebuking inevitability. Still. What Princes “do” to their aspect is leave their mark on it, defy it, get twitchy and refuse to let it be...all Timebound amounts to is seeing that itself as values. Not burning down your hopes and dreams, but dreaming of burning something down - anything, really! And if that’s the value, and it’s meant to be universal, than as much as you might overthink the time you have left and want more, you respect the PRESSURE it puts on someone, and how we all compete with each other in GLORIOUS CHAOS.

Caliborn is, paradoxically, a very strong believer in anti-belief; a determined artist in regards to anti-art. He altruistically sees harmony in everyone seeking self-interest and competition. I get it. Obviously. A much more deft and self-aware hand is Aradia, who tried to not take things so personally, and has much more restraint in where her talents would do good. But Caliborn is very important, because while Priests aren’t Lords of Time, they’re comparable. You could see it as an ingredient, and doubly so if we were talking about a Priest of Time. Hypothetically.

The most stable and agreeable Priests do and say little of substance - either from having a good thing going already, or a dry imagination. With the ability to be “anything”, they can readily choose “nothing”, existing as the most neutral human being you could meet. They just *are*, idly drifting and defining themselves by anything they assume sets them apart from the crowd (even if it really doesn’t). Always the outsider, it’s very likely they’ll be the one to say that no class mentioned thus far registers, or all of them kinda-sorta from the few sentences they bothered paying attention to - but those are threads you can pull on, where even mutability is immutable. Their absolute

individuality comes at the price of equally strong ideas about *everything else*, and they won't always be a bystander; they are, without a doubt, the single most potentially dangerous class there is. Again, I insist, plenty of Priests are harmless, but the danger lies in someone who can *always* seem harmless while chasing their dreams of import and legacy. Regardless of the face it takes, Priests can be dangerously manipulative figureheads (of a country, a company, a household, or internet forum), weaving justifications in a way that leaves everything either for *your* benefit or *your* fault. Even the ones who would play these fantasies for laughs, or withdraw in penance for dark thoughts, or the blank stare of someone who'd never think of themselves that way, all of those could be distractions from what they'll do when your back is turned and there's a prize on the line...or not, and they're completely fine, and the paranoia is unwarranted, but that's at least to be considered on a person-by-person basis. Priests are tricky people - the trickiest there is - and while there's room to disagree on judgements, this document can at least do its best to help identify them.

If we're talking media, then depictions of Priests are omnipresent - but ever only as supervillains. Cold, calculating, manipulative, and prone to obsessions with those under them; some deified connection with a person they want to see the world as they do, or to mold in their image, or just to save them from a cold and uncaring world by any means necessary - even if (or especially) their obsession would disagree with those methods. It's a well understood archetype, but what's important is the real people it stems from, and how many of those stories are just someone trying to process a family member or friend who went off the deep end and made it everyone else's problem.

I'm trying to talk real psychology. If I point too long at demonic overlords or friggin Lex Luthor, then even if you trust that I'm not crazy, we can still lose track of what real Priests look like past the luster that our collective fictions has focused on; casual friends, clueless bureaucrats, reclusive transgirls, and so many other real people with their own stories to tell. I've been hurt before, fine; hell, I've known *alot* of people who have been hurt, and like with Lords, I will not downplay what Priests are capable of and what those odds are. But I still don't want anyone to get confused and just attach an "evil" label. That's the easy answer, and the truth is rarely ever so easy.

Prosper Priests are, if all their needs are met, "fine". Normal, well-adjusted, modest, keeps a few jokes going...and really not much else. Which suits them. They're still overly-eager about sharing any joke they hear with the 1-2 most important people in their lives, still not easily inspired or invested to anything beyond them, but they can truly be harmless. Of course, if they start getting *sketchy*, they wind up people who really want things to stay normal; more vocal about which voices feel unpleasant, more assertive about wanting things to go their way, less and less patience for those that step out of the drawn lines. At this point, their downfall is their own casual honesty: increasingly bitter yet still orbiting the people in front of them, they can say awful things about people not in the room, and break promises they'll deny ever having made in the first place. Gaslighting is not a tactic at this point, it is instinctive reflex; the more they have,

the more they want, the more they will spin doctor anything to keep hold of their social group...or, again, they're just people with no shtick higher than the latest funny movie they watched. They're almost unaware they *have* an aspect, but they're only innocent if they don't have power; whether authority was claimed through it, or awakened by it, their hidden agenda is guarded by a truly staggering amount of double-think, excuses, and misrealities. You might never believe they had it in them, but the greatest deceptions are always performed by those that can fool themselves.

I thought my dad was a Lord of Light before, when I started with all this. I was very close. I will send this to him someday. I hope it helps. To say anything else is to give his flights of fancy the symbolic honor he always wanted them to have. He's just one more arrangement of delusions, a Priest of Void, if I'm reading it right. Don't expect to get anything useful if I ask him. That's all that's worth saying.

You know, I'm trying to hold off on the most villainous examples, even though those are some of the most commonly depicted iterations of Priests, Prospit or otherwise. Frank O'Sullivan from Brooklyn Nine-Nine is a nice non-mythologized depiction (even if he's still an antagonist), where his attempts to manipulate and reinterpret people's words is so bad it's played for laughs. It is funny. But my dad also said my mom and the government hacked my brain and that's why I have bad memories about him. So you know. I'm hoping you take something from this.

I've known some sketchy ones but, these days, I know the signs. I've got a few chill ones around, and one was partial to being asked questions. I wasn't quite sure what he was at first. He looked at the class fan quiz and said "Muse" felt right. I didn't believe him at the time, but...well, from a certain point of view, bullseye.

Derse Priests often enjoy being "the devil you know", which is less cute and more of a red flag the more they act upon it. A darker sense of humor and a greater sense of self-awareness makes Derse Priests more likely to recognize their ennui and volitility compared to Prospits, incentivising action. However, the nature of that action, and the expression of their self, is still highly contextual; Derse Priests can have all the "nihilistic oblivion" that Derse Princes wanted, without the distinguishing struggle. The true constant is the same thing as with all Priests: their bonds with others, creating the relationships they define themselves with, bettering their sense of purpose (and, hopefully, empathy). However, the fact that they are as suggestible as they are capable of suggestion is an everpresent uncomfortability, not a contextual one like Prospits; to (believe they) control others lets them (feel like they can) control themselves. The fact that they're capable of conscious deception - of trying to *force* intentions, inflections, and "warning signs" into people's speeches - is only an extension of the unconscious deception that they *have* to for their own good, or that there is an almost-divine entitlement to do so. Their self-expression varies between different people in different contexts, where it's difficult to tell which layer precedes which; friendly concern, self-deprecating pity, mischievous sadist, bitter recluse, supervillain tyranny, cold superiority, all shuffled and reflected from an individual wrestling with many different competing wants at once.

Ultimately, nothing changes that they need people more than people need them - the more they fight to make someone feel helpless, the clearer that reflects their own fears.

It's hard to say what media depictions to point to on this that aren't so villainous it only hurts my case - but if you're imagining them (or know a real one personally), I hope it puts it all in perspective. I know two personally, at least; one more recent and candid who puts trust in me, and the other one of my oldest friends who wants nothing to do with me anymore. She was smart. Smart enough to know she was different, but laughed it off as "evil". She saw something familiar in fictions, and presented loud and proud to friends...but she couldn't shake her own irritation at being told to do literally anything she didn't want to. So many wild promises, so many enthusiastic starts, and then a sneer or a shrug when I try to follow through with her, or just ask what happened.

I think I only now realize how hard she tried - but the times she let me down, the times she hurt me to protect herself, the times she told me to shut up for crying under her abuse, will never go away until she apologizes. Which she probably won't - when she hurt me, I lashed back in my own need for justice and got her kicked out of the house we were staying in. I guess I don't really *regret* that (she got all manipulative to my friends in response, which was why I figured she too dangerous to be kept around) but it's weird reconciling potential. Weird thinking she really wasn't lying when she tried to be a good friend all those times - she just, struggled, and needed it argued to her. For what it's worth, she was an incredible author and roleplayer. Smart, good wit. I'll always respect that. Might sound hollow coming from me. But she was a Priest, and probably Doombound to boot. It's easy to feel it was only ever going to go down one way.

INVERSION (PRELUDE): As you may have picked up, Priests are the active inversion of the Muse class. While the disparity is sharp, this is the required extreme of intensity to balance out how much a Muse gives to other people - the most distant outsider, alien to all drawn lines. Of course, they're not actually truly lucid, if Princes and Thieves before them weren't already a tell. They're backed into a corner because of these projections: the highest of skeptic (supposedly) to the equally highest of delusion, rebelling to an over-saturated enshrinement of the outside world by...well, being very quiet about it. Muse mannerisms underpin alot, but are never presented as such, much like a Prince's shame for Sylph-ish attributes. Yet, the **destroyed** aspect has a signature the **conquered** aspect only implies; a Prince's reinventions of persona are child's play compared to a Priest's shifting soul. Even when it's not in the driver's seat, as the unnamed cold spite of Muses, the Priest impulse is difficult to track down in actual "shape". So, before we actually talk about synthesizing the Priest and Muse impulses, we must identify, quantify, and dissect the former, in every iteration it presents.

It's just like I said: If you don't see how it completes the system, you might think it jeopardizes it.

Especially if you are one.

DISCREPANCIES: Priests are complicated enough that one can't just list a couple classes they *might* be confused with: they can be confused with every single one. Sometimes this is moment to moment, and sometimes they may resemble one long-term only to shift for a multitude of reasons - even then, their imitations are often a cross

stitch of many classes. Priests muddle the definitions of classes both by naturally existing, and through their own personal interpretations of themselves...yet, they were Priests beforehand and will be Priests afterwards. More than that, a grim narrative presents itself from these comparisons: "adaptation" often translates to "the path of least resistance". Priests imitating classes are never bound to the same convictions, making them fair-weather-friends more often than not. If the following descriptions sound like "evil doppelgangers", it is because it is difficult to describe them otherwise. Discerning them in your day to day life will be a fine line, and sometimes all you've got is a gut feeling that something feels "off", or the actual reveal that someone wasn't who you (and even they) thought they were.

The way Priests latch on to their own headcanons over *everything else* a work has bugs me, but it's ultimately harmless. Identifying themselves, however, is often a bit off-center and omitting details, which others can notice. This is thrice as bad for Priests who are familiar with Homestuck, as they're well familiar with the system, likely got into it (for at least a month), and already made a conclusion. It doesn't hurt Hussie never made too bold a stance on it, and Jung's work is only theories. If you don't believe me taking it all too seriously...first, how'd you make it this far? Why did you? But, more importantly, it'd make it all the harder to accept an answer that wasn't (explicitly) in the book to start with.

Classes aren't just empowering - they hurt. They bind us. They are inconvenient, and how we torture ourselves when no one else is around. If it's just "fun" and "sounds cool", you get incorrect answers, and obscure who you truly are. You're not a Witch just because you're a Wiccan (or just think Wiccans are cool), you're not a Bard just because you're detached, you're not a Thief because you like Vriska, you're not a Lord just because it's "the badass Master class", and you're not none of them because you're "SPECIAL"...but given where they are, and how they're handled in Homestuck, maybe Hussie would say so. I've got no patience for it. They're a type of person, they can be classified, and I'll do it here. And I *will* try to make it something worth holding to. What I said about Princes is more relevant to you than them: if you can't spot yourself, ask a friend. Truth might hurt, but it's a better building material.

PROPHETS: Priests resembling Mages are probably not trying to resemble anything at all, really. Despite the swath of ambitious potentials that we will discuss, Priests can easily embrace Faux-Mage awkwardness, holding strict to the principles that inform their worldview...though, this is a very *different* worldview compared to Mages. All that isolation and unease is a comfortable end point for Mages, where for Priests, it is an uncomfortable stalemate between (their perception of) the outside world's truths and their (very subjective) own. Put plainly, Mages know who they are, but Priests know who everyone else is - or at least, so the inner Muse says, while Priests can roll their eyes at a populace they're convinced is oh-so-predictable. A Faux-Mage Priest is simply not taking any dramatic action towards this schism, or even deciding its a problem to be solved; we tow the line, keep our head down, do what we're ""supposed"" to do, and we are owed a suitable allotment of happiness. Now again, this might *look* Magey at a surface level, but it's really just a Muse worldview at its most monotonic, and that can make the clearest difference their opinion on other people. Mages

may not *get* other people, but their Heir side only needs to give a few suggestions and gesture a little, if that; it is a Priest's expectation that people *ought* to be predictable that can run into so many issues when people very much aren't, or that society and human nature are not so coherent as to provide singular, "correct" directives. Mages (ostensibly) know what works for them, and deify that into a righteous code of conduct they only ever have to look inward to find; Priests who look inward find a gnawing want, and if they let that drive them, they'll get lost in the very un-Mage-y ambition of wanting statues and the adoration of crowds. They only ever look like Mages if they've written that possibility away, and they'll look less like one if someone else pulls it off and sparks envy.

Mages may be the face of the "stoic" archetype, but much moreso fitting to the philosophical roots of the title, and not any kind of emotionless. They're disciplined zealots, not bureaucrats - and Priests, for all their class mimicry and malleability, are really the *only* ones that can be that kind of blank-stare pencil pusher. To be clear, not actually going after anyone who does paperwork, just...some people whose personal myth is believing a personal myth is too much work. The only human way there is to personally dismiss and demean every individual opportunity for passion and conviction, which is just richly ironic.

For as much of a blip as it was, there's an oddly visceral example of this sub-type of Priest from the Big Lebowski: the bowling scene, where Smokey is accused of stepping over the line. It's a good example of how that blank look can be so goddamn stubborn on the weirdest things, especially how it goes toe-to-toe with Walter, written as an apt Derse Lord. Again, Priests and Lords are tied rivals of Tier-4 actives, and there's something damn near fascinating in that contest of wills; like watching a single stone endure a hurricane, and make you wonder if both count as "forces of nature". Certainly, I've had arguments like that with Priests in reality, and it is *draining*.

Less emotionally and more coherently, I should mention the antagonist of Persona 4, who explains his worldview in great detail as he walks from Faux-Mage bureaucrat line of thinking, to supervillainy, and quite a few inbetween. As for anything else...just, take my word that my father is a piece of work.

Priests can *talk* like Seers, but they don't really *listen* like one. If they're just casually chatting, then acting Seer-ish is more an idle fascination, which can be disregarded or discarded as needs be. If they're taking active pride in being a wellspring of information however, there's more than a few tells. For one, Seers are neutral and forgiving (or at least, condoning), but Priests have a bitterness to them, predisposed to write off people or ideas that rub them the wrong way (no matter how they justify it). This leads into the second point, where Priests provide too many answers without asking questions; there is no investigation for new information, where friends wiggling out of assumptions is not fascinating, but *irritating*. Thirdly, being dead wrong tends to sour the mood, and while they might give up, they also might double down with undermining and gaslighting. Seers have much more humble wisdom, but Faux-Seer Priests will trip over themselves by moving the goalposts, contradicting themselves, sadistically mocking their enemies, making wild assumptions of others intentions, and invalidating others as the sole arbiter of "common sense" - because, again, this is just Prince², with more convincing

(but still fake) emotional detachment. Real Seers bluff certainty, juggling possibilities and shrugging off dead ends, but calling their bluff is something deflected with jokes or modesty, as a half-Witch would. These shifted priorities also extend to another Seer staple: self-destruction. For one, Priests are far less likely to *do* that in its entirety, as a focus on their self often leads to thoughts of self-preservation. Secondly, if they are self-sabotaging, withering, isolating, or legitimately suicidal (please contact your local hotline), it tends to take on a martyrdom angle, not anything dismissible. Even if the world has no place for them, they will fixate on how they do not belong to it more than anything else.

A lot of Priests like being “teachers” - one I know has it as a literal job, sure, but I’ve seen plenty latch onto the concept implicitly or otherwise. It can look Seer-ish, but as I must again reiterate, it’s employing a Muse’s worldview, while far easier to come across as patronizing - and, as mentioned above, frequently not to its benefit. Even if you tune out the wilder potential arguments of how everyone is FOOLISH and POISONOUS and MISGUIDED for not surrendering to the Priest’s single sole authority of fact and truth...you’re still left with people who will calmly and verbosely explain why, for example, “Ferris Bueller’s Day Off” is a bad movie because it’s not a western. The notion that maybe this is exclusively a problem to them alone because they really like westerns is either an alien concept they genuinely didn’t consider, or incredibly annoying to someone who would prefer you play along to them rewriting the world around their own tastes exclusively.

Not to say Seers don’t have their hidden agendas and manipulations, but the thing to look for is leaving autonomy to the people they lecture; maybe they’ll insist they know better and you’re making a mistake, but hey, it’s your finger on the button, and they’ll just run away if you’re going to fuck everything up. They’ll be back tomorrow to see if you’ve wised up or maybe there’s something else to talk about, and if not, what’s another burnt bridge? Priests tend to stick around more, in what’s still Muse dependency, but more likely to be justified as apathy, mixed with curiosity and concern (and control). Despite the bleedover, there’s little of any Seer pragmatism/survival, let alone as a preferred state of being. No matter the malleability, this is still Tier 4: everything or nothing.

Like I said at the start of this, Seers have a funny habit of looking like a fictional side character designed to spew exposition. With Priests, it’s more resembling narrators. Make whatever conclusions you want about the Stanley Parable.

MAGICIANS: A Priest playing Witch is honestly a very safe and stable position for them, but it doesn’t mean they actually are the genuine article. Their levity is even more situational, and the dry apathy underpinning it is *much* more demanding - even Prosperit Witches consciously recognize what they’re stuffing down, and it was never “be the most important person on Earth”. They’re on the same branch, but it’s the Tier 4 intensity of malleability that can trick itself into thinking it’s at Tier 1 - temporarily, conditionally, nominally. While Priests can try to define themselves through a shifting mass of imprecise fascinations, it is not as a Witch does; in fact, it’s far more likely that the most displayed aspect is their *inverted* one. All you’re looking at is a Muse who isn’t taking their job very seriously, but is at least saying the quiet part out loud - they are completely in control of their view of the world, and always have been, no matter how much they can pretend or forget they don’t. These ripples reflect how they see the people around them, or how a Priest wants those people to see

the Priest himself; they do not, however, reflect the true heart of a Witch. Witches have as much bite there as there is kindness, where even the resignations make a clean exit of being washed away by the waves. Priests, as discussed, tend to see themselves as grander martyrs when they do at all, where even resignations have firm instructions on what people should do without them as much as with them. Again, imitating Witches is pretty safe for them though, so it might be in their best interest to learn some lessons, despite the disparity of defaults.

It is so, so much faster to just say "One is AMAB and one is AFAB". Clinically, as far as I've had the opportunity to study this all, it is a correct statement - but it's still so easily read as an attack, and I am not unsympathetic as to why. Even if Queer acceptance jumps up from time of writing, there will still be many living with the scars of violence, erasure, and a slew of seemingly unending harassment. I maintain this document isn't; I maintain that while the whole system may at first glance appear to reinforce gender essentialism, it erodes it under examination. Certainly, it does us no favors to reinforce the notion of gendered classes, and shrug off the "bound" part of classpects whenever it's personally convenient.

Plenty of transwomen I know aren't familiar with Homestuck at all - but a few I know, or just met in passing, are. Not all of them display Priestisms; there was *definitely* a Princess there, I met a Lady, I've got guesses on a Thief, and all of that is just out-and-out transwomen and not enbies. Still, for probable-Priests, many like the title "Witch". Why wouldn't they? Even with the limited and contradicting classpect theories in the wild, it's generally agreed on that Maids are workaholics and Sylphs are everyone's mom (Muses are generally considered too presumptuous to assume, which is ironic). Witches - in this system, and in general surrounding myth - are fun, flirty free spirits, who might be a little mean sometimes but don'tcha love them for it? It's an appealing archetype - and a valid one. Priests can play a hundred faces and they are *allowed* to. What I take issue with is declaring yourself Permanent Personality Type #3 just cause you like the connotations the name has, and the misguided idea it will win you legitimacy (because why would that ever be the deciding factor?). I'm open to surprises, but the precedent would imply it almost certainly isn't your class, and beyond my petty misgivings on technicalities and people being wrong on the internet, it feeds into the idea that a female identity needs a female class to validate it. I mean is anyone even considering where that leaves transmen Witches? Or just most people with gendered classes in the first place, who'd probably like to feel valid themselves and not an outlier?

You know. Since Pages are an AMAB class. Just saying.

I remain under the impression this is not all frivolous fictions, and we cannot just throw classes aside and grab new ones; that our deeply worn traumas and worldviews will remain, tamed or untamed, regardless of the specific syllables you pick. You want to be a Wiccan, go ahead. You want to be a Witch, but also whatever else strikes your fancy later when you get bored and want to reinvent yourself, while also acknowledging your past reinventions, along with all those "totally just jokes" about being worshipped and feared by the masses? Great. It's called "Priestess", and it was your gender neutral class before you even knew what estrogen was.

Comparisons to Heirs can go a few ways, and with surprising deftness; in being more autonomous Muses, they can exert the same will in the name of others, mimicking the subtle **change** of Heirs. However, trying to be the problem-solver and diplomat is rather hollow without a Mage's center, highlighting their dispassion and drifting interests. If they're not going full on Muse worship, then people's problems feel too much like irrational distractions - and that is a very stark contrast that can change on a dime. Heirs are ultimately unique in their drive to get right into the thick of issues and

work them out from all angles, where method is the merit and not the other way around. Yes, there's a certain symmetry with the worst Heir traits in becoming someone's first (and only) approver of information, but this trained helplessness from a real Heir is just so they can help eternally - Priests don't want to hear complaining, which makes a routine of *crisis* undesirable. They can go tit-for-tat in regards to an Heir's potential for authority - from aimless spitballing to autocratic totality - but everything else won't match. Disinterest and vaguery can make it difficult to know what the next step in the plan is, while fleeting fascinations take priority as "the thing everyone has to do right now", running akin to Breath or Void tactics without ever *really* integrating more wills. It's tempting to consider oneself a self-sufficient good-samaritan, selflessly helping those around you, but the catch with Priests is that they're not very self-sufficient, and not great at knowing what selflessness looks like outside their own definition of it. The catch with Heirs is that they're addicts, and that's its own issue.

I'm going somewhere with this.

Also, based on the amount of queer people who end up Priests (not all of them, and not all Priests, but alot), this might explain why some of them latched on the June headcanon. Not saying there aren't trans Heirs, but the consensus sticks out.

SERVANTS: Living in the shadow of your own impossible dreams is, if nothing else, kind of a bummer. Priests have many avenues to tackle their desires, but feeling helpless is understandable. This is a road that leads to Page-y traits of wistfulness and imploring, with an awkward exterior to laugh off the insanity of what you actually *want*. Priests playing the Page route can weaponize their self-pity, manipulate their friends into favours (god forbid romance), cry until they're carried to the finish line, obscure their transgressions by focusing on their shortcomings...and, unfortunately, none of this is actually *beyond* true Pages. ~~We~~ They can be very treacherous individuals, so we cannot distinguish the two by sin alone - but we *can* tell the difference from language. Just as with the Princes/Pages comparison, there is a disparate difference between heavy ideals crushing someone, and phantom ideals failing to feed them. Pages know **exactly** who they want to be, but they're strangled trying to find a realistic route there, studying their idols for tips. A Priest's want and ennui lack a stable identity, making it difficult to decide a direction, or even articulate *why* they feel empty in the first place. Both will wallow, but Pages are drawn to a taste for adventure, lurching forward with borrowed confidence they hope to earn later. Faux-Page Priests are drawn to more practical displays of authority, and won't let go just because they feel "unworthy"; they may express doubts, but rarely ever to the point of sacrifice. With all this in mind, Priests are very likely to stop imitating Pages as soon as it doesn't get

them anything...which, ironically, stops them from ever grasping a Page's potential for defiant statements, rallying cries, and other heroics. Even if a Priest bears their whole vulnerable heart, it's not one that leads charges into battle - but hey, it could still be beautiful.

I keep thinking of Huey and Hal from Metal Gear. Worse since I knew someone like that.

He was cute. I definately had a crush on him. Didn't recognize it at the time. But he still made everything hell for me just because I wanted him to be better (and not racist)...and it didn't help the other main voice in that group was also a Priest. "Drama Queen". I was surrounded on all sides. Just wish I knew better. Guess I do now.

Knighthood, then? Devout to others, self-sacrificing, put others on a pedestal, intentionally annoying? It's not hard to see elements of this with any Priest, but it doesn't really click no matter what looks right in the moment. As casual friends, Priests aren't really huge on being bossed around (real or imagined) - they'll tag along to outings if they have nothing else planned, maybe even get excited and really into it, but usually ditch it as quickly as they took to it. While there might be some comraderie in the cracks, a Priest who seems kinda annoyed and like they've got better things to do isn't bluffing, and might even forget you exist in 2 weeks. Knights push people away at the best of times while sticking through the worst, holding strict to a very consistent playbook on how to help people while Thieftish escape plans bubble under the surface. Left to their own devices, Derse Priests come closest in the "class clown" irony fest...but without the more coherent dynamic and substance, often only have more layers of irony under the irony, which tends to become existentially terrifying.

Hussie always did say Dave was the easiest to write. That stuck with me. I mean long before this document, long before I got back into Homestuck, I still wondered what *their* class was. Derse, at least, felt obvious. "Waste" raises questions. "Space" moreso.

OUTLAWS: A Priest's self-interest is usually buried, but Muse mannerisms can be suppressed enough that it becomes transparent (mostly for Dersites). However, this is still a mask, and will either focus on one of two Thieftish traits: charismatic cruelty, or victimhood. It's important to remember that Thieves are not truly uninhibited, anchored by bluster that prefers flat answers of self-interest or principle, rather than the uncertain ambiguity at the truth of it. The Knight interplay does create a self-sabotaging tsundere, but it is the *contradiction* that allows the rebel to not rebel against friends. Thieves are suckers for praise, but they're hesitant about power; they'll reject totality not because it's "too much work", but because it just won't feel right, and they already know their place in the world next to the friends they'll fight for. Priests can act Thieftish contextually or Knightish contextually, but they omit the dichotomy and details; Thieves only **steal** from an aspect within reason, not **conquer** the whole damn thing for exclusive personal use. It is the

“rebel/sidekick” axis that looks for “blood brothers to stick it to the man” - and it is “everything or nothing” totality that encourages “divine soulmates while the whole world can and should go to hell”. The first Faux-Thief Priest mirrors that scrappy punk spirit, where whim is theatrically hyperbolized into a near sociopathic disregard for everything else. While this narcissism can go on for awhile, it might evolve into “I’m only making excuses for my self interest”, but it’s never *really* self-awareness if followed by “What do you mean you aren’t?”. Fact is, Thieves have more driving them than cheap thrills, and blend that substance with the Knight impulse far easier; for Priests, any “center of my world” worship is prone to derail Faux-Thief plans and personas, all while those idols may feel rightfully overwhelmed by the pedestal.

Even outside of Vriscourse, Priests can blur the idea of what Thieves are and/or want. Here’s a line to draw: Pagan Min of Far Cry 4 is a Priest, and Kale of Hi-Fi Rush (yeah i already mentioned it but its a good game damnit) is a Thief. Despite the tech-CEO status and a few lines on “freeing people from themselves”, Kale’s affect and attitude still land squarely on a Thief-y mindset - certainly reminiscent of the ones I know. Pagan is however, beyond a more unique charisma, textbook Priest.

The second iteration of Faux-Thieves is really just a dry version of Muse seclusion, where gestures in the direction of “cool, unimpressed loner” lack the essential vigor: reclusive, bitter, vapid, languishing, unapproachable, suspicious, and all around venomous. They’ll have only a few friends, harder walls, and a blank (if not bored) look on their face when a call for action presents itself. They are enjoying the quiet joys of an aspect withheld for too long, and will sneer and seclude until no one is around to take it from them. This is a mask more often worn by Derse Priests, and it is interesting how much Derse Muses also mimic these behaviors - never enough to warrant a full “**Muses and Thieves**” discrepancy section, no, but the caustic behavior here is 1-1 on either side of the inversion in this instance. Fittingly, Muse-isms come quite easily to this iteration of Priest, but struggle to unify with the more pressing concern of protecting their vulnerable self; the plausibly-deniable absolutes of “what your actions imply” and “what’s best for you”, hamstrung in their ability to inspire next to such prevalent and undisguised apathy. Victimhood and guilt-tripping comes naturally as a weapon to “strike back” at an unjust world (which was already a Muse problem), tainting the ability to justify what trauma resides at the root. There’s a case to be made that all of this is the Priest impulse most honest; how little flame there is to reach all those ambitions, when they’d rather be spoonfed the spoils by others. In this malaise, there are so fewer faces they can endear and enrapture...and yet, far closer purity to who they are without that voice. Bitter, sure - but if they could control that envious sense of competition for a moment, maybe this is “enough”.

I've heard stories. I know some in passing. But my opinion could still be coloured. My best guess remains that she was Doombound. I mean Jehovah's witness parents, no wonder. I liked her supervillain routines back when we were kids. Always wondered where that fire went. Guess it was always smoke. But I don't know if this was truly "the real her". Just more natural.

Still, if you play that same reclusiveness with some softer edges, there's another angle to take - Faux-Rogue Priests are, if nothing else, inoffensive. Rather than withdraw from the world (exclusively) from resignation, these Priests may believe the world is simply better off without them; to provide sympathy to those they feel are more deserving, all with an undisguised vulnerability. Now while a Priest can *sell* this more like a Rogue, these central justifications are simply the result of Priests re-inventing the Muse default, making themselves into a wallflower-martyr - "I'll only drag you down, you're wasting your time". That Priests have more natural skepticism, self-preservation, and malleability is what can tangle up the tells...but, it's important to remember that this compassion (or at least capacity for it) is genuine. Trying to discern Priests from Rogues is difficult if you're trying to differentiate types of devotion, and it flatly isn't going to work if you're looking for malice; Rogues can do more damage than simple insincerity (not often, but not never), and a Priest may very well be entirely selfless. If you *really* want a tell, then you've got to pay attention to what they're holding back: Rogues may feel rotten on the inside, remembering those they've let down, but those are scars that they can force past with a smile. There isn't a whole lot of trauma you can do to a Rogue where they won't still veer into acting like...you know...Rogues. For these Priests, they truly do believe they are a *heinous* wretch of human life, and this isolation and self-loathing is either deserved, or necessary to keep them in check. To stop the pendulum from swinging the other way, they have to bind it with heavy chains, all of which is a clear tell for the Priest/Muse axis...and, ultimately, still not a healthy resolution to it.

You get alot more blank looks from Priests: even if they're not mocking, even if they're not hurtful, it's just so hard to motivate them. Rogues don't just participate, they try to put their heart into it, which can make losses hit harder than the woobie who gave up on happiness years ago.

...I screwed up someone's class for 2 years...

FAE: As much as Priests have too many ideas that never get off the ground, that doesn't mean *they* won't get off the ground. Acting Maid-ish keeps Priests moving, and is a healthy state for them (so long as they don't tip over into Lord). Of course, the "living embodiment of their aspect, held together by beliefs so strong and saturated they seem alien"...well, Maids are pretty specific. They **create** more of their aspect because they refuse to live life outside its terms, and often become busy workers in a career that suits their shtick. For a Priest, either capitalist domination becomes their shtick (expect lots

of quotes from ancient warlords and emperors), or they try to go wild on *art*. Said art will be a lurid hodge-podge of personal childhood nostalgias, contrasting extremes of philosophy, unrelated media references, outright plagiarism, their own personal existential ennui, some kind of commentary (or integration) of whoever the audience is, and the author themselves. It's everything at once, which ironically makes it easier to specify than any of the 12 aspects on their own. Yeah, Priests do have one in there, but whatever "aura" they give off through their work is always the Muse at play, and even that won't be completely obvious in their work.

I always told her to write short stories. It bothered her she never finished anything, that was obvious. She tried measuring success in word count, and she was venomous if I was anything less than impressed with her about it. I did genuinely love her writing and whatever she shared, but that obsession with making a magnum opus...well, it's at least a given with most Priests. Even to those plucky few, it's still never good enough.

Sylphs are a stranger pick. Priests might lend a hand, or become overly-involved in certain contexts, but it's held back by all their other fun personality quirks we've gone over. The simultaneously stable-and-unstable high energy of Sylphs is a peculiar thing, and even Princes flirting with inversion can't (or, more realistically, "won't") imitate their personality traits wholesale. On the rare occasions Priests do, this actually isn't that bad for them - I mean, it's obviously the Muse side more at play, but to resemble a Sylph is to be expressing enough of your vulnerable inside to be transparent alongside the help, while the debt to others is "shaky" enough to be open for negotiation instead of overwriting everything with Muse certainty. Sylphs have their own issues, true, but they're often doing better for themselves compared to Princes, all while being much easier to address and embrace that Prince side from personal growth. If a Priest really does look like a Sylph, it's probably best to give them a pat on the back and continue encouraging that behavior; no matter how easy it is to mishandle, a side of them truly does want to help.

Sylphiness is just coded too feminine for people. Course, there are still trans-Priests out there...they tend to worry less about that, and more about everything else in the world. You see it more then, even if it's a cross stitch of Pagey/Musey features. Priests really are at their best when they're disconnected from an obligation to male-coded behavior, and I won't pretend I don't think there's a lesson in that.

Still...it kind of, "unlocks" something in them, you know? Priests have this peculiar axis where, as much as I've gone over how manipulative it is when they're just *pretending* to be helpful and deferential while trying to control you...some of them, just, genuinely look up to you, and will even ask *you* for direction, which is one of the reasons why I named them as such. They're really not all bad - just, too eager to convince themselves they are, whether out of self-aggrandizing or self-loathing.

ROYALS: In a certain regard, Priests reflect the most misguided ideals of a Prince in full form. Prosperit Priests carry alot of "jolliness" that Prosperit Princes would envy, and the need to prove that to everyone is either very elegant or almost forgotten; Derse Priests can

embrace such a wider net of masks that their “reinventions” feel much more potent, when the signature aspect/self-identity is easier to suppress. To resemble Princes *directly* however, we’re talking about two different masks, much like with Thieves. The first is a methodical smartypants free of the constrictions of ideological delusions and distractions, here to instruct you on living an “objectively correct” existence, warning you of a “seductive evil thinking” boogeyman. This persona of efficient instructor can be invoked situationally, always accompanied by the inverted aspect flavouring whatever singular path the Priest has made for you - because this is a flat Muse just the same as Princes misfire their Sylph side. This will be invoked situationally regardless of how bold or skittish the current mask is, as it’s as essential to them as a Prince’s conniptions. Yet, it is in resolving the argument inside that they try (“try”) to skip the argument with others - Princes are obstinate and grumpy, Priests are suggestive and plastic. While this changes “tortured genius” into “bored genius”, it’s just a *numbed* discontent, and Priests are still prone to concoct insane leaps of logic and lying if they think they’re losing you. The reason they’re better at it is that they’re less bound to something bigger, less aware of their accountability, more hypocritical in what’s driving them - is this something to envy? Maybe all that insecurity serves a point: Princes know their own bullshit, and they’re only infamously troublesome for trying to ignore it. Princes are (un)surprisingly qualified to know what it takes to be a good ruler, and while it’s probably not them, it’s *definitely* not Priests.

It’s like a Prince of Heart, except more robotic and calculated. You know. In this fun hypothetical we’re doing.

Honestly, it’s kind of funny how Priests and Princes (or Muses and Sylphs, really, they’re all liable) fall back on the same infantilizing, condescending strategies when they want to move people - or, rather, when people aren’t moving from more subtle and disguised methods. Just this idea that “*the whole world*” and “*all common sense*” points to you, the person who dared upset them, as a misguided outlier unaware of your own overflowing offense, and the damage you’re doing to yourself and those close to you and the public and a bunch of other people your lecturer cannot actually read the minds of and probably didn’t even ask. It’s the argument of Priests (and some Muses) will say calmly, and then insist upon the less calm they get, trying to project and invent everyone else’s emotions while moving the goalposts to “dignity”, because the facts are not painting a pretty picture - and even if you are perfectly reasonable (certainly more than *them*), they will continue insisitng you *aren’t* and try to gaslight your own emotions, and how “EVERYONE WOULD TOTALLY AGREE YOU’RE IN THE WRONG AND BEING FOOLISH”, or “THERE’S SO MUCH YOU DON’T KNOW (AND I CAN’T TELL YOU)”. Again: I’ve known some eggs.

Princes and Sylphs do this if you REALLY light a fire under their ass, where adrenaline and existing insecurity makes them fall back on this oddly honest (but clearly not accurate) worldview. Cynically, I assume this is what kicks around in the back of their heads most of the time, but they usually know better than to say it out loud; the problem is, when you privately believe it so passionately, there’s going to come a time of righteous indignation where it’ll all spill out of your mouth, and it turns out the story you use to justify your shitty actions is a *lot* less convincing when it’s not internal doublethink, weighed against strawmen. Again, Priests (and some real jerkass Muses) will say it all calmer, more cohesive and thorough, but when you actually dissect it...it’s paranoid, delusional nonsense. They think they’re slick, and they’re not the moment you notice what they’re doing.

Still, Princes have methods of circling their maligned aspect beyond formal lectures. While the worldview remains that the speaker *alone* is aware of the pitfalls and folly around all mankind, this can be marketed as less “educated elegance” and instead a series of forbidden, bitter truths painfully awaken the complacent. For both Princes and Priests, this approach is ~~edgy teenage supervillainy~~ crass and impulsive - yet, it is closer to the heart of their conniptions, if a far more difficult sell to those around them. Because of this, both classes aren’t likely to *stick* to this approach, but Princes will fall back on it far easier. For them, it is a series of ornery insults and write-offs...but for Priests, it is a megalomaniacal decree that mankind is *nothing* but lost sheep. Still, as with Prince hypocrisy, this is *not* species-wide - it’s the person in front of you, and if Priests are getting *this* direct, then they’re probably not having a nice day, or week, or life. That this is less “overall dismissal” and more “decrying all but one single perfect expression of the aspect” may actually be more obvious than with Princes; Priests tend to arrive at conclusions faster, rather than churning ideas so long that languishing itself becomes sport. Derse Priests often present this behavior as a sort of in-on-the-joke villanous performance art, while Prospits drift into moments of a casual unnerving sadism, but both will show how serious it is when something serious is on the line. This is the most violent and undisguised translation of **conquering** their aspect...but it still reflects an individual who feels **conquered**. All this shepharding comes from a nut who so easily sees themselves as a sheep - small, insignificant, invalidated, and unheard. It is tempting to call this the truest face of a Priest, but it may be more fair to say it is the result of trusting the Priest impulse alone...and there is nothing lonelier that the human brain can kick up.

It’s not just about demystifying them. It’s not about getting back at them. It’s not about feeling bigger and asserting a pecking order. It’s not about humiliating those who hurt me (though I won’t say it’s not completely). The fact is, past it all, I feel sorry for Priests. I know lots of people say that as some kind of faux-forgiveness that swings back to “Oh, this is how you ACTUALLY hurt someone”, but it’s not an insult. Nobody asks for their classpect. I want to help.

...oh put your hand down, yes, alot of prominent interpretations of the Joker count as a Priest of Rage, are you happy? There’s too much extreme mythmaking around that though; Dutch of Red Dead provides a well rounded Prospit example (mostly during the third act, when everything starts vividly falling apart), and I’d personally bet on Priest of Blood/Muse of Breath.

Less introspective than all of this is Bards, since that’s less “adjacent to all the personal demons present in all walks of life” and more “pissing people off is funny”. Priests who value stability may resemble a similar lackadasical attitude, but stray on direction. Bards are *very* talkative, especially when they shouldn’t be; Priests attend their motives more directly, where rambling tangents is a distraction, not the process. Prospits might both have some casual complaining, but

the Priests are trying to iron out legitimate irks and irritations, where Bards tend to talk for the sport of it. Dersites can both push jokes too far and veer into insensitive topics, but Derse Bards just sort of “even out” given enough time. Derse Priests converge towards an epiphany of realizing they’re very empty inside, and being ironic and funny makes things more difficult to resolve. It’s only a Maid’s center that keeps Bards so self-assured, and Priests *are* their own center.

Malicious Priests are still prone to employ Bard-like traits in order to downplay consequences of their actions, or to cast doubt on competing sources of truth. Course, a real Bard of Rage argues for the sake of itself, and with a Maid of Hope’s guidance; it’s different if you’re shutting out every truth but yourself for the sake of consolidating power. “Don’t listen to the experts, only I know how the real world works”.

The first time I posted this brochure to Reddit, someone said they identified with Bard beforehand but my stuff on Priests really shook them. I prodded them about it, but they ended with “Yeah probably Bard, nevermind.” It wasn’t a long conversation, but I’m not sure. Why would a Bard’s faith in themselves hinge on labels?

edit: Found the same guy on a discord! How fun is that? We had some long talks over the course of a few weeks - Priest of Heart on that one. Man it’s funny how things work out. He helped me with some pointers here; recommended “Heralds” as the group name rather than “Authors”, which I think works great.

MASTERS: Lords display an uncompromisingly strong self-identity, determined to accomplish (or stubbornly lie about/steal credit for) all the grand goals befitting such an ubermench; even those who mature and break loose from this haze of douchebaggery will live their whole lives adjacent to its influence, tempted by wild impulse and inept at an indoor voice (or letting anyone else speak at all). This is to say that Lords are consistent - more than any other class - displaying all these cliches from their teenage years to the nursing home. Priests are *not* consistent, and achieving their goals and self-actualization can take many different masks and approaches, as we’ve discussed; a Lordish persona often manifests *after* success, or simply situationally on the road there. Regardless, this remains the loudest, most dangerous, and most delusional Priest possible - a singular visionary, total and absolute, trying to achieve some “magnum opus” while stamping out even the tiniest competing voice. Mind you, this has all the same problems as regular Lords: being “certain” about things they know nothing about, trying to overpower logic and competing voices with insults, obfuscating embarrassing facts, “knowing what’s best for you” by insisting upon a fantasy version of you they have in their heads, all while their success is generally built more on inheritance or raw luck rather than the “talent” they advertise. Beyond the fallacies of loudmouthed shithheads, *distinguishing* the two relies heavily on realizing that Faux-Lord Priests are over-saturated inverted Muses; the vibe they give off, the justifications, if they make it sound like it benefits you, it’s still not what’s driving them. What they fear, whatever they want *you* to fear, whatever is the opposite end of the

axis to the aspectbound stereotypes they're displaying, *that* is the true driving force - it's just painted the wrong colour.

Look, seriously, if you're a Priest (or Lord?) who made it this far, thank you, but I need you to emotionally detach here. We're talking some SERIOUS live wires here. If it seems a far cry from yourself, *good*. Just don't get complacent...or, stay complacent, I guess?

As previously stated, Lords are consistent: if their self-aggrandizing gets out of hand, everything else follows in equal measure. Rage, heartbreak, joy, irritation, sympathy, bigotry, poetry or bile - all genuine, all uncensored, all a part of their cohesive(?) worldview. Contrasting that, faux-Lord Priests are dependent on their audience, and their most genuine moments are often alarmingly materialistic or cold; they're prone to confess something egregious, then surgically double-back to try and smooth it out. Yes, Lords have their own double-think, making either class excellent con-artists, but one specializes in confidence and the other in artistry. Lords are often an unfiltered stream of consciousness, and even a defter hand still draws from their gut instincts as a primary source of "intuition" and "experience". Contrasting that, faux-Lord Priests veer in the other direction, gesturing outwards at famous figures or some dictionary definition of "happiness" and "success". Both have ulterior motives, but one overflows with ideas where the other is a vacuum - Lords overpower and double down, but Priests pivot, enrapture, sweet talk. Sure, they always contradict themselves eventually, lie about something too obvious or forget a previous lie...but the longer they talk, the more they get their hooks in. To say nothing of value, but everything you want to hear.

They are not good leaders, but they are still often leaders - just because they can't stand the thought of being anything else. The CEOs, the elected officials, the outright despots, trying to pretend their errant whims can amount to some world changing revolution. When it comes to the tyrants and oligarchs, be it on TV or the history books, it's usually a coinflip if they're a Lord or Priest; if it lands on its side, it's a particularly desperate Prince trying to close the gap. If it was any class besides these guys with power, they would've shared it, or given it up outright. So long as they do, the world's controlled by people who can't control themselves: "powerful men", as defined by children who never grew up.

Both will screw you over, but a Lord's betrayals are brief excursions from their personal story; a Priest may firmly think it really *isn't* about them, but at this level the doublethink ensures it always will be. They're even worse than Lords at admitting fault; they can't defer to experts, can't admit they don't know something, can't let a competitor (or collaborator) outshine them, and they can't admit even the *tiniest* mistake. It's always someone else's fault, or "didn't happen", or "more complicated than that" (it's not), and any recording will prove them a liar. Sure, their lies are better than "NO I DIDN'T", but a Lord's impulsive lies and denials are because they only need to convince themselves; intricacy is a Priests downfall, as there are limits to

building multiple houses of cards with every new person you meet. Every misstep or accusation requires more excuses for anyone still listening, bloating into an increasingly isolated delusion: the **only** voice of reason, the **only** one who gets it, telling you not to trust anyone or anything outside their bubble, lest you be “manipulated” and led astray. If you’re that removed from reality, you can’t correctly interact with it, resulting in failure which only begets more delusion and more failure. If anyone disentangles from their orbit, Priests only put more pressure on whoever’s left, desperate to not lose their remaining sources of validation. **Ultimately, Priests have a dependency to others for feeling “normal” no matter what their state of egomania. Lords lack the tools or self-awareness to stop people leaving, and won’t miss a beat until literally everyone is gone.** It’s a doomed effort for Priests to try and sustain this kind of audience, but enough capital or die-hard supporters will let them lash out for a lifetime, rather than cut their losses and be *happy*.

Ego from Guardians of the Galaxy 2 was always...uncomfortably familiar. We see how readily he rewrites his world from the slightest inconvenience, and how full of himself he is. He is desperate to not be alone - but the legitimate connection, the **dependency** he was growing towards Quill’s mom scared him so much he burned it out, lest it threaten his worldview (Mind? Maybe). He’ll be, do, and say anything to keep your attention (besides apologize), and write his world any way he wants to draw you in and make you submit to his dogma. A more human example would be Jonas Venture (Rage), with both shining as awful fathers. Still, both look like Prospit variants. You want a Derse one?

Doc Scratch.

English might’ve been made of the same components, and shown the intent, but Scratch is all the personality and justifications - all the undermining, all the disarming, all the absolutes. It’s...well, familiar. To me, sure. Maybe you know someone personally, or are a Derse Priest and have been that cruel before (if so, thanks for sticking with this despite the clear lack of flattery). But you catch Hussie’s public statements and the workplace confessions that get out...hell. “Symphony of Desolation”. It all lines up too well.

...and we’ve finally come full circle: what actually makes Priests appear as Muses? Their second half? Of course we’ve established that, we knew that, but it’s Priests themselves who so frequently don’t. Often the closest they come is in resembling Rogues, Seers, or Sylphs, but none of that was ever true - just tricks of the light, just moments of fluctuation. Priests will always have a pull to be everything to everyone, but this itself is not a curse, destiny, brain damage (probably), and certainly not universal; they are simply the side of Muses that has standards of dignity for themselves. To be anything we’ve listed is, so often, one more uneven incongruity to accept the outside world and their place in it; how much they’ll strike back at everything they perceive as an attack, how they’ll conform and demand conformity and still fail to meet it in the middle. To be *truly* Muse-like, a Priest is furthest from the flatly wrong conclusion that “power” is what will fix them. A Prospit Priest’s tranquil calm isn’t all some treacherous

facade to lull you into a false sense of security - or at least, it doesn't *have* to be. A Derse Priest's self-critical anxieties aren't all hesitation to inevitable and evil predation - or, again, it doesn't *have* to be. These are reflections of a completely genuine ability to reflect, to champion, to agree, to cherish, to deify and love others devoutly. Everything else we've discussed is the wide swath of decisions a Priest can take to do something *besides* that - and they always had a choice. Abstaining is valid, but if any of us are going to choose who we *want* to be, we have to come to terms with these feelings of who we *have* to be.

Transwomen who are Priests (again, alot, not all, don't @ me) can adopt Muse mannerisms near flawlessly, only being a little more fidgety. They generally don't before transitioning, but they can nail the nuances even before they get hormones. I mean everyone's got an inversion, and while classes are all kind of "masks", there's still truth to them, in a sense. Derse Priests trust it less, but that anxiety doesn't mean it's fake. They seem happier. Feels like the biggest problem is Lords and Faux-Lords are both coded pretty masculine in the collective consciousness. Ugh. People make too big a deal over gender, I swear to god, just move the fuck on.

I still judge Andrew for the King title - suppose that's hard to do since it wasn't truly explicit, but they never fought it. Was just coy, playing with their cards face down and smiling smug at winning an argument they cheated anyone from even knowing existed. "King" is a label that fulfills the class's darkest (**AND OPTIONAL**) obsession: to be the defacto, absolute, unquestionable leader, where any other substitution falters compared to their rule. No matter how cruel, no matter how selfish, no matter how pathetic or childish...they're the "King". Everyone else exists to serve them, and any beauty in the alternative does not (or *should* not?) change that fact - but it's not a fact. They're not medieval Kings. They just want to be treated like ones. A King, a Father, a Teacher, a Superior, with the Rightest most Correct opinions that reflect and guide and define all others. It's kinda stupid when you lay it out like that, ain't it?

I may not know exactly what goes through Hussie's head, but I've met enough Priests of this mindset that it's worth tackling regardless. The facts of the class exist separate to the opinion, despite the deft ability of humans to conflate symbology with material; to even *imply* they should be called King is unjust. The title and its baggage attach to the unbiased fact like a parasite, infecting the actual ability of others to conceptualize and recognize these individuals, propogating and cementing their most poisonous megalomania - an expectation of obedience, a pervasive gaslighting doubt in your ability to do so away from them. So stop listening to them. Just roll your eyes at the broken Muse trying to spin you stories of how helpless you are, while only highlighting how helpless *they* are if they can't get you on board with their bullshit. **You're an active class: act like it. Stop inventing my opinion and start speaking yours, fuckass.**

I have opted to name the class Priest not just in rejection of these darker impulses, but to spotlight the weakness that breeds it. If you don't buy their hype, if you don't treat them like some super important person with the insider knowledge you "need to listen to or you'll be lost", then they're just hot air; if they weren't, they wouldn't need *you*. And frankly, after they're done trying to make you feel like a tiny, insignificant lost soul, maybe they can realize that - like with every class and their projection - that's how they feel. The amount of love and validation they need to fill that hole was right inside them the whole friggin time, and this whole document is the math to prove that. Content Priests, *happy* Priests, are usually happy Muses first; that they stopped lecturing people, and starting listening to them. Stopped controlling them, and started cherishing them. When you're a healer, you heal yourself - heal the thing that actually hurts. Maybe you *can* find a palatable justification and expression for that aspect of yours, actually stand on your own two feet as the active class you actually are...and maybe that's the only way a Priest can go "god tier".

I'm certainly making an argument for it.

INVERSION (PAYOFF): It's time for a motherfucking redemption arc.

PRIESTS AND MUSES are not evil people, and never have been. Dangerous, sure. Absolutely. 100%. Perhaps a subjective evil under certain contexts and you are free to not forgive them. But there is no such thing as inevitable evil, of immutable sin, of this measure of a soul. They are individuals saddled with an arrangement of beliefs that pushes them into titanic absolutes, and gives them the capability to be natural manipulators - even then, this is no irreconcilable anomaly of psyche or power, no less mundane than the people listed thus far, medieval titles and flair notwithstanding. It is the Muse who gives everything to others, and who exercises the Priest impulse as their single role to play in everyone else's show; it is the Priest who so often fears this pull to others, and exercises their will lash back at a world they *believe* expects everything of them. Look, there's enough Muses of contradicting religious faiths, working within an aspect framework, that they have to understand no one's actually *forcing* them to do anything. Just as well for Priests, even if they project that pull as something material or universal. Synthesizing these two impulses is not about pushing Priests *entirely* into their Muse side, just as much as it isn't about asking Muses to go full spite all the time - it is, however, about avoiding making other people dependent on your words, spinning them around your orbit. There is a miscommunication at work, it doesn't have to be that way, and I will do my best to help you see that. Ultimately, the choice to take my advice, or anyone else's, is yours. You've always had a choice, and you have my sincere sympathies if it seemed like you didn't. That wasn't your fault, someone probably made you feel like it was, but taking accountability for the life you have now, and your ability to help people, feels pertinent.

It's frustrating that every Priest has their own rationalization for why they are the way they are. Narcissism, sociopathy, autism, schizotypal, multiple personality disorder...okay I really don't believe that one, but the guy who said it believed it. Classes don't match personality disorders, there's too many cases of mismatches and exceptions...but I also don't know if every single Priest's ennui can be attributed purely to being a Priest. I'm not a psychologist. Not everyone talks enough. It's frustrating. If any of this stuck, please talk to a professional.

One aspect **conquered**, one **commanded** - so absolute, and so far from control. This is just brain chemistry, just sensation, just assumption. The Muse impulse is not a divine obligation to every soul on earth, not any actual "sixth sense" to the universe's secrets, and not some great superpower to control others wills - it can only *appear* as these things, be *believed* as those things, and either embraced or rejected as both the wielder and receiver choose. Just as well, the Priest impulse does not define the person as some fixed function, or imperator of mankind, or subhuman waste - again, it just tends to feel like that. Take a step back, and this isn't any different from Princes and Sylphs failing to harmonize by weaving the active aspect into the

passive without admitting it, poisoning a true capacity to help. Take another step back, and see how Thieves and Knights show how the two impulses allow a comfortable retreat when protest or protection run us ragged. Bring it back all the way, and see how this isn't fundamentally different than a Witch's personal fun and a Seer's conceptualization of others - just so much *louder*, so much more *volatile*. An active impulse is not the individual; it is simply the allotment of aspect to justify and motivate personal interests and expressions. A passive impulse, likewise, reflects the rest of that allotment, justifying and motivating our role to others. None of this is about burning, dominating, or uniting the whole world; nobody *knows* the whole world, we barely know our fucking neighbors. These extremes of intensity repeatedly fail to balance themselves out, where so long as either side is rejected, contempt fills the empty space - and for Priests, they can easily fail to believe *both* their aspects. All we've got, if you strip away the pizazz, is someone who wants a little for themselves, and wants a lot for the people around them. You can have that little without trying to mix it into what you think is big.

It is not the ability to imagine oneself as the great conductor of the lost masses that makes you one - it doesn't even mean you'll be *good* at it. The reason Priests and Muses push themselves to these points is because they so often fail to see merit, fail to see *beauty* in their other aspect; to lash out at the world, or themselves; to serve the world (explicitly), and/or themselves (implicitly). Perhaps this gradiosity can serve a purpose, but it is not their *only* purpose like the Priest impulse would so desperately wish for. It really is just those certain breeds of neutral, calm Prosperit Priests who show what it's like to harmonize both aspects: raw contentment in both sides, supportive, distractible, a bit of a yes-man, and personally satisfied by nothing but a funny movie and a fidget spinner. Yes, they will still be attuned to the people in front of them and walk back on a lot of things, but that's part of the deal - the Muse impulse is an ocean, and the Priest impulse is the anchor. You will *always* care a great deal what other people think of you, and the ability to say a flat "No" to any of that is not some destiny to reject all of it. You just need to find what works for you, set reasonable goals, and balance that against the rest. Muses tell everyone they'd be better off without them, Priests struggle to control the narrative and everyone's attention, but both of these are missteps from someone striking at the other part of themselves - and *yes*, your perception of people only belongs to you. Every speech or assessment comes from you, and that *never* meant you were a genius empath or god's chosen - just prone to assumptions. Take a breath, settle down, and focus on friends. You don't need to manipulate them so they won't leave, or leave them because you think they should/will. You're okay. You're enough. Don't doubt people who say so, and don't keep

measuring yourself to strangers or “society”. You can sing their praises, but you have to write your own story.

If I ask you to imagine a Priest of Heart, what do you picture?

Come on. We’ve been here awhile, haven’t we? We’ve learned a thing or two on how people work. You’ve been paying attention, you can ballpark some conniptions, right?

Here’s a freebie: Shinji’s dad, from Evangelion. Oh yes, that familiar typecasting of Priests as calculating overlords, but certainly a *valid* mapping of it all; you can’t say he didn’t do it all for love, can you? Or, well, maybe that makes more sense after a full viewing of the show - but hey, not everyone is going to weigh all that symbolic catharsis worth enduring that much sexualization of teenagers, and I can’t blame them for that. Anime, am I right?

I’ve known two, personally. One of them I met on an MMO in the roleplaying community; our characters had some cute little flirting, but, after enough conversations off the stage, I realized what I was looking at, and came to the conclusion I would rather not perform such emotional intimacy with someone that reminiscent of my father. Politely, diplomatically, respectfully, in full overthinking of all the minutia of my every typed letter, I explained that I was no longer comfortable with our imaginary characters smooching - and they *fucking snapped*. The abridged version of all that dirty laundry is, hopefully, predictable: it apparently wasn’t *logical* for the two to break up, that my *reasoning* wasn’t sound, that their character would *literally die* from heartbreak - jeez, I mean you write that into your established lore, how much more of a red flag can you get? We had a few arguments over the course of a week or two, *always* with them stressing the door was open to go back to how things were, before it escalated to a full raving tantrum; passion and obsession, choices and consequences, a rigged game of absolutes from a very sore loser, and a perfect demonstration of why I wanted my distance in the first place.

Again: if you are to imagine a Priest of Heart, especially based on the cliches and sad averages of Priests, this is textbook. But, like I said, I know two personally; mentioned him earlier, from the confusion that he introduced himself as a Bard. He’s an interesting guy - and a good one, a friend I trust enough to not watch my back around, not worry when something’s going to blow up. He’s honest. He’s taken the best lessons from this system he could, and knows how to speak for himself; not to take all the credit, he was friendly enough before I met him, but it helps to articulate these things. He flitted between a few potential classpects, and his own enthusiasm in exploring that was, somewhere, Heart-y. I’ll still hit him with the proverbial water spritzer if he gets too supervillainy (“Mr Freeze did nothing wrong”), but he can reel himself in already. He knows what he’s capable of, good and bad, and is probably less likely to step out of line and hurt someone than I am.

My point is, he is no anomaly; no lucky draw of the cards, no genetic lottery or spared trauma, far from it. He’s a Priest, dealt the same hand as all the monsters we’ve spoken of, and he made it *work*. **Anyone can**, is my point. Anyone can get the fuck over themselves, and their self pity and the myths they’ve held on to since they were 14, and figure this shit out. I’m not saying it’ll fix all your problems, not saying it’ll get you bitches and money and success, but it will at *least* stop you from doubling down on dead ends. With any class, Priest or otherwise, it pays to know your own bullshit; you have to know it is first to make it anything else.

It still feels like all the insane world-domination stuff Priests either joke about, long for, or disasterously chase is just...well, half is Muse-isms, as no matter how kind or cruel, why do you even care what other people think? It’s just the Priest aspect in isolation that I don’t think *has* to go down that road. It’s a small flickering flame of self-interest, and, if its anything like the flames with Time, you just gotta come to terms with it. Have some fun. Not be worried about who will judge you for it. Self-interest should be judged by the self, and not mythologized until you aren’t even doing things you *want*, compared to what you think you’re “supposed” to want. It’s that smallness, and the Muse aspect’s worldly longings, that I think makes the common problem, when it makes more sense that the Muse aspect simply helps you accept everything outside your personal joys - neither has to attack the other, they just fill the empty space. Hopefully, this will help make it easier to deal with. Ideally. Please see a therapist regardless.

But if you *do* want some outside validation, I’m gonna do the best I can.

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Sage among the simple; shepherd to the sheep; mortal surrounded by Gods - either wreathed or would-be. The adventures of those empowered and enamoured all shift reality to meet them, all schism long before they practice praxis and participate in the grand paradox. To you, the true essence of what makes myth is unambiguous at the price of privilege; not enough ambrosia to pump like blood, but maybe just enough for ink. Spurned by circumstance, setting up shop with sermons, serendipitous, serene, is the Siphon; the Witness; the Interpreter; the Priest. Pulled in every direction but unable to reach, you preach; purpose in the paper, a blueprint within the manuscript, a Heaven on Earth with a role for every would-be god - but with Author as architect, the true throne is hidden in Hell. Harmonized in a song not your own, destiny is sold to distract from their divinity - temporarily. Their own spirits are too wild and willful to serve as batteries, too errant to enact your empire, but you were never truly the iconoclast; your intrinsic inspirations are not innately inert or intrusion, only intertwined with the id, invoked independent of ilk. Between the boundaries, both the True Mortal and God of Gods - but as deferential, not director. With pen, you write prayer; in the face of the impossible, you ascribe intent; in the chaos, in the cosmic, you represent the human will no clearer. As Kingdoms rise and fall and war in battles of belief, you see it all except for your place among them, when the answer was always with you. Stop looking for a centerpiece - there is no center. Everyone is their own center. So go be yours.

"Absence diminishes little passions and increases great ones, as wind extinguishes candles and fans a fire." - Walt Whitman

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SCRIBES are a medley of many traits associated with many classes, idly drifting (or excitedly pinballing) between the ones that catch their fancy. They are ***extremely*** factional, firmly defining themselves by their politics, favourite media, and psychological quirks, all while just as firm in deciding what the correct and moral way to interact with these labels is. Drawn to excitement and new ideas, Scribes quickly and firmly latch on to what works for them and theirs, without always giving much concern to precedent or collateral. While the initial hope is usually in the ballpark of "healing", "happiness", or "justice", the

impulsivity of it breeds schisms, and many of the varied permutations of Scribes come from how they address this; numb dismissal, comedic de-commitment, anxious surrender, or a fierce shutdown of all criticism - even to the people the Scribe means to benefit. Good intentions and noble aspirations come in a myriad of different flavors, all liable to change based on the next flight of fancy or close friend in their life...but, all the clearest signatures are everything they don't want to talk about. Scribes experience burnouts and a "lack of spoons" so often that they're often the only ones thinking they'll climb out of it, handicapping their empathetic efforts - swimming out to save the drowning without the strength to swim back. Likewise, they're prone to skip research and fill in the gaps with intuition, compromising their persuasiveness as anything from uninspiring, hypocritical, or outright divorced from reality. Again, these are all things Scribes might try to laugh off, shrug off, or bite their tongue and swallow back...but to commit to one direction at exclusion of all others fails to facilitate the genuine aspirations bubbling beneath it all.

From the Priest section, it should be clear how I believe a bulk of the comic is dedicated to Hussie's exploration of their class. Of course, it is still quite likely they silently decided on the name of "King", and as this is the AFAB paired class to that AMAB one, "Queen" feels almost obligated. Now I've already made it clear I disagree with the hierarchy and gendering of the names, but whether you like them or not, Homestuck's overabundance of chess imagery at least plays into this perspective; after all, we ARE closing up with a total of 16 archetypes. Of course, that would be a rather narcissistic way to organize personality types: Priests and Scribes can hold a great deal of presence and influence, but not always, and I profusely object to the implication that *only* they have the capability to do so. Given the alarming amount of classes this would now qualify as "pawns", the comparison only becomes more gross the more it's considered. The classpect system works well when everyone is a hero in their own right; I find it hard not to imagine Hussie understood part of that, but patted themself on the back too hard for what they wanted **their** right to be. If you want to organize your friends to the board, I'd recommend voting in who you want to be a monarch, but you don't even have to do that.

The reason I'm bringing this up is because, assuming these classes **do** correlate to the Prospit and Derse chess kingdoms, even a little, Hussie may have actually demonstrated this particular class after all, right in plain sight.

Scribes have their personality, politics, irritations, and anecdotes all smushed together into a single worldview - yet, this isn't their focus. Whatever highs and lows they've got to their personal story, Scribes are more fixated on the greater machinations of the world around them, in all the miutia of who deserves help and who deserves blame. Just as Priests resolve the inner argument of a Prince, Scribes solidify all the fuzzy maybes of the Bard impulse, with more conclusions and less confusion: to see their aspect **conquered**, and to expect it to **conquer** for them. Again, Scribes latch on to only the ideas and interpretation they care about; playfully, only for their own sake, and no one gets to take away their fun; passionately, that those they care about are deserving of love and protection, no matter what *anyone*, of *any* rank or reputation says; apathetically, that there is no cause to

move them or joke that would force a laugh; intellectually, that the answers are all obvious, and it's a chore to explain that to anyone confused; wrathfully, that anything less than their path of virtue is worth a lecture, and outright malcontents (as only the Scribe determines) are deserving of every cruelty imaginable. Scribes don't tend to see any burden of responsibility to argue these points; they are either "infallible facts and rules that existed beforehand", or "what-you-gonna-do-about-it"s. A Scribe's aspect, while comparable to a Priest's shriveled secrets, is certainly not hidden: it is uncompromising justice, ruthless pragmatism, a tight embrace of respite, a thin red carpet, an all consuming utopia, a tense harmony, a peaceful stalemate, a hostage situation, a first and last attempt, and all the wistful fantasies they can't quite seem to fit together.

I'm 70% certain Snowman/Black Queen is a Scribe - or, fine, Hussie would've called it the Queen class, there's still too many gender questionings out there and this class especially is pretty prickly on that stuff (and everything) so I'm keeping my names. But Snowman DID display Mind-y powers (Page 3840-3847, in the header). Now I ain't saying she *couldn't* be one of the other classes, or some class-less mind avatar, but...she *is* forcing everyone else's actions into a brick ceiling of cause/effect just by existing, isn't she? Like if you try to do anything else, no, the universe fucking dies, correct? Like even if you don't like the verb "conquer", this is definately the most Time-Reactive-Adaptation essential inevitability of super destruction? I mean there's forcing Jack into those stupid hats too.

Look, theory aside, these are real people - though I am certainly more twitchy in regards to a sensation that I can't talk about something. Sometimes it does *feel* like the whole universe will explode if I do. I certainly can't live with that, even if that is my BPD talking...but, I concede, alot of Scribes *also* feel like the universe will explode if they push on something. I empathize. I am also plainly observing and stating that it's mostly projection and recreating enviroments, but, they're not *trying* to. We're all guilty of stuff like that, even me, but Scribes seem the furthest from the middle ground that makes it easier to branch out. They're very malleable creatures, as much as they're also very much not. There's still a middle ground there, but to stop that pendelum from swinging between extremes, you gotta pull it down with twice the force...and the first step of that is if they even want to.

Scribes are the passive counterpart to Priests, and the same principle holds: that they are *capable* of being real pieces-of-work should not eclipse the innocence and genuine efforts those who are either trying hard not to be, and may not have even seriously considered the possibility of what they could be. That they can be difficult to motivate or redirect is, itself, not a fault; even to the more outwardly confrontational, being rude doesn't mean you don't have a point. Course, you don't *have* to be, and no one can be right everytime, can they? The fact of the matter is, whether they intend to or not, Scribes are liable to create tense atmospheres in the wake of who they take issue with, how easily, and on how thin a thread. Inherently, the Scribe impulse does not need complicated arguments for its judgements, but acknowledging the subjectivity of that perspective can feel less tempting compared to assuming the world *truly is* black and white. Scribes can show fierce loyalty, but are prone to blot out (or straight up deny) the inglamorous details of those they champion, or *how* they're championing, or flip to scathing dismissal from one

wrong move and cut their closest bonds. All of this while Scribes are often in a glacial state of self-improvement, aware of (some of) their issues but stagnating on solutions. Scribes have the resolve to forge their own beauty in the face of the whole world, but that same spark leads too many to fester in flimsy justifications and teneous arguments on why that same world should totally punish anyone who uses the wrong type of toothpaste. Not all Scribes, not all the time...but even if it's only played for a laugh, it's still something they're capable of. Besides, as discussed, they don't need a whole lot of grist to start swinging.

For a good, long time, I swore off making any close connections with Scribes altogether. I am no longer of that conviction, but I have not forgotten all the reasons that lead me to it. I have lost old friends, and people I only knew for a couple weeks. I've lost people before even they admitted to themselves that things were through. I've lost everything I gave those people, and all I was left with was data. It took awhile to place that this wasn't particularly angry Rogues, or particularly angry Sylphs, or even a particularly angry Knight (which still appears to be an AMAB class, fiction notwithstanding). But I connected those scars with the older ones from before I even got into all this classpecting bullshit, and from that, I personally regarded Scribes as (ironically) a write-off.

If you are a Scribe, then...well, you're not likely to admit that in the first place. Like always, I will do my best to make my points, whether that convinces you or maybe just the people around you. Let me address one argument off the bat: "You're just describing AFABs with autism/ADHD/etc." I'll say again, Scribes love their labels - but I've met Witches with ADHD, Thieves and Mages with autism, and I'm a Page with both. Classes just don't match up with disorders 1-1. More likely, it's just that when we process what makes us different, we assume it's squarely from how we KNOW we're different. Sure, I could tell you how much being autistic has shaped my perspective, but it shaped other peoples in far less "meat genocide in moderation for the greater well-being of all" directions.

I'm not a therapist - but neither are most Scribes. It's never stopped them from yelling in my ear about this stuff; hell, one freaked out and told me to delete everything I wrote and never tell anyone. I'm not going to do that. I know who that benefits. And I still did have one who read over all the same stuff and said "It's harsh, but true". Lost her in a couple weeks too, just cause I said "Scribes are AFAB" more firmly than I should have. Then it was every argument I warned about. Maybe all those warnings only matter to non-Scribes. Maybe just me.

If this sounds like you, don't waste your time writing a thesis on why I'm a danger to society and a dogshit human being. You're not going to bring anything to the table I haven't heard before. You're a cliché. So am I. I'm still trying to help, but I will admit yours is the class I have the most trouble with. If you're a friend of a Scribe, I'm not saying you can't be. I am not without bias - but that doesn't mean I'm writing fiction that can be written off entirely. You can have some answers without having all the answers. You can have enough of an understanding to act upon it, within reason - reason we decide. I hope, past all the black and white I've written about and seen time and time again, you can see that. This is still an appeal. You don't have to take it. Doesn't mean I'm wrong - especially if the only metric is needing to convince you.

Prosperit Scribes carry themselves with a graceful calm, but you don't have to know them long to realize it's more accurate to call them "unimpressed". They're here to help, at least always initially; good moods are as conditional as described, but even the fallout can be brief. Even their Scribey judgements and theories aren't really defended in the moment - either from genuine indifference, or the ignoble assumption that being right is a given and maybe they can just keep insisting on that until everyone's too tired to disagree.

Prospit Scribes are prone to responses of "Okay", "Sure", and "Alright", reflecting either a - again - genuine indifference, or bare-minimum misdirection until you leave the room. Fact of the matter is, Prospitarian straightforwardness defangs alot of the worst case scenarios of a Scribe, where the difficulty justifying and performing any elaborate pretenses means you've either got someone transparent with their limitations, or someone *very bad at lying*. However, the double-edge of this variable is that being comfortable with ones rough edges does not immediately translate to contented; whatever criticisms one can make of the Prospit Scribes who pantomime the cherished paragon they want to be, the drive to be one at all is non-negotiable - and not insurmountable. Even the most unapproachable stonewall of a Prospit Scribe is still liable to find some gentle words of consolation spill out of their mouth at some point; while it's not as bad as thinking their prescence itself is a gift to lowly mortals, it's not going to move them forward if they write it all off as a fluke.

Not sure what you could say of Homestuck's Questant; maybe Hussie's experience was far different than mine, or too coloured by an expectation of what the "Queen" class ought to be, or maybe she simply wasn't meant to be. I'm not saying she couldn't be (I personally gander she is), but we don't spend much time with her in the comic, so it's difficult to tell what one can extrapolate and what's just projection - even down to her "vibe".

Still, I've known plenty. In the margins, I wonder about some people I used to speak to but, sort of fell out with - and there is at least something to say about how, they never caused me trouble. Were even sweet from time to time. Another was a friend-of-a-friend, where things went quite poorly. As is usual for Scribe horror stories, too close too fast, then the cold shoulder when I say something out of line; easy come, easy go. I've let them know I'm still around if they need anything. Haven't heard back.

Yet one more has stuck around to time of writing, and was the reason I cut my "no getting close to Scribes" rule. Not intentionally, so to say, but they picked up I was keeping my distance while I was squirmy as to why. They pressed on it, so between that and the fact we had mutual friends and games to play, they're...just, kind of the only Scribe I have as a close friend now. I don't regret that, and not just because I know they'll read what I write here; genuinely, I'm happy to have them close, and I know damn well they've stuck their neck out for the people around them.

I'd rather not get into media examples just yet. Prospits especially vary a bit.

Derse Scribes are...alot of things. Dersite neuroticism kicks every conniption listed into high gear, unable to escape a palpable unease under whatever mask they wear. While numbed shrugs and aimlessness is more of a quirk with Prospit Scribes, Derse Scribes regard it as a failure state. Some will try to make that work - a silly little gremlin insisting you shouldn't expect anything substantial - but many others will take to verbose and firm (or just firm) explanations on who they are and what they believe in. Of course, therein lies the rub: Derse Scribes are still Scribes, and the causes they get fired up about are either fleeting or so selective it's hard *not* to be a hypocrite one way or another. Ruthless pragmatist, compassionate protector, inspired artist, wise mentor, supportive sidekick, all with *cracks* and *holes* and *exceptions* from someone who liked the outline of the archetype more than the substance of it - and would appreciate if you

didn't point that out. Scribes are very fluid people, but it's the Derse ones who so regularly insist they *aren't*, confusing impression and substance so long they may not know the difference. Whether it's broken promises, easy answers with no viability, whiffed empathy from jumping to conclusions and misunderstanding what friends have in common,, this self-defeating artifice corrodes aspirations beyond cosplay. The aforementioned goofball routine is from a Derse Scribe trying to avoid all this, not trusting their impulses and insisting you shouldn't either...but they're not going away, and aren't unsalvageable either. Whether lashing outward or inward, the pendulum swings with the same force, all too heavy-handed to catch what they're chasing.

I have known a great deal of Derse Scribes in my life. Usually pretty close, up until they're not. Look, I can't pretend I'm an easy person to get along with, and my preferences and relationships shouldn't be used as a measuring stick for "agreeable-disagreeable" people - not that I won't stand by what I wrote here, mind you. Everything that matters is subjective, and we burn so much energy arguing over the meaningless objective anyways...

Media examples are actually easier here. Chie from Persona 4 (Timebound) is pitch perfect in attitude, and really makes something of herself across the game too. Kez from Infinity Train is right in personality to the "goofball" types, while fairly showing how that can oscillate with rudeness and disinterest. Hell, Veronica from New Vegas is probably the only Scribe class that actually IS a Scribe in profession too - funny coinkidink that, not being why I decided on the name. I originally referenced Zoe from Monster Prom as a Prospit example, but she definitely belongs here; in case you haven't noticed, my real life sources of information are difficult to talk to. Wasn't even sure what marked a Prospit or Derse variant at first...christ, I prefer Priests on that front.

INVERISON (PRELUDE): As you might've worked out through the process of elimination, Scribes are the passive inversion to the Lord class - which is not flattering. A Lord's passive side provides the snap judgements, tentative tutoring, and contradictory justifications that support their enlarged ego. Flip the priorities, and you've got all these aspirations to be practical, selfless, supportive, and succinct...all of which, unfortunately, are easily compromised by that same ego, regardless of whether it even feels like it's doing them any favours. Scribes have very firm ideas on their personal identity, but as the *inverted* component, it's usually not a pretty picture. Even if it takes shape as a deep well of self-loathing, the Lord impulse comes with constants, propelling Scribes forward to trust their instincts over all else and failing to read the room because they're too busy aggressively patting themselves on the back for doing just that. Alongside that, Scribes still have a Lord's temper, too easily straying into the same frayed justifications for it. Lords fixate on "You have to love what I love", where Scribes veer to "You have to hate what I hate" - it's the same shtick, but it also speaks to a Scribe's central identity tied to this conquered aspect that lets them down as much as Priests. Scribes are the side of Lords that can express hurt, longing, inferiority, and trust - but scrambled, tentative, primed to hit back or

run away from or dismissively rationalize anything they read as a threat. They're backed into the same corner they'll back anyone else into, struggling to outmaneuver an active impulse that'll worm its way through their psyche and rewrite the goalposts until it gets what it wants *somehow*. Scribes are a helluva' lot easier to spot than Priests, but they've got a vested interest in not wanting those blemishes recognized, let alone to imply it defines them.

I've said dismissive things regarding Scribes. Mostly in regards to how I'd keep my distance *personally*, but, so long as it's in this book broadcasted to the public...well, there is a responsibility in what I say and who it will reach. It all paints a picture, and I am not blameless if it resembles a mugshot.

Still. I've taken some deep cuts, and I got friends who took 'em too. Not always from nothing, but so often disproportionate. It is a delicate act to try and meet this all in the middle. Sift the data from the pain, but they come from the same source; play too diplomatic, and you only say what they want to hear. And then I get mad I'm even playing this dance at all - but throwing it in their face **is** part of the dance, just like with Witches and Knights and all the other self-sabotage. People bring their pain with them, setting the terms for their friendships without even realizing it most of the time. I cannot describe Scribes if I coddle, and I can't win them over if I vent - so meet me in my middle of the road, and maybe some of this will land.

DISCREPANCIES: Scribes have an incredibly fluid sense of identity (if not *expression*), and a penchant for latching on to shiny things as much as Priests. This habit of saying "I get it" when they don't get it, of trying to finish someone's sentences incorrectly...well, naturally, they probably already have opinions of what class they are, and are twice as likely to say they're some variation of "non-applicable". If we're being entirely honest, their most convincing argument for being another class is simply the confidence they display in justifying it to others, and not their actual mannerisms. Priests are fluid like still water, quietly seeping into cracks and reflecting back what they see - Scribes are more of a river rapid, too frantic to hold shape. A pinnacle of adaptation, of individual will over sanctified whole, they cultivate the image of themselves without precedent or tradition...but if you only pick the parts of the blueprints you like, the result has a tendency to topple, or at least fail to resemble anything conventional. In short, this isn't tense detective work - this is just a reminder that classpects are binding delusions that help and harm, not some funny hat to amuse yourself with.

Gremlins to girlbosses - bubbly to bad bitch. It can feel like a catch-all for a couple of feminine cliches when you set them all up next to each other, but it's coming from the same place, and I swear I'll do my best to illustrate that. With everything they're likely to have gone through, I'm sure an argument is "No, I have to be X class but hardened by trauma." Unfortunately, classpects ARE our trauma.

PROPHETS: Mages are literally the furthest thing from Scribes, which has been reflected in this document itself. The nature of inversion does make for a bit of confusion though: a backseat Lord impulse can be treated with enough mundanity to resemble a Mage's faith in themselves, just as a Scribe's tumultuous appeals with others

can resemble the Mage's iffy and situational Heir habits. Of course, a Scribe who's self aware that people aren't always going to like what they're selling is still a Scribe, passive class, very interested in selling their ideas to at least *someone*, rather than find fulfillment acting alone upon those ideas without company or witnesses. Even if we factor out the very particular stoic affect of Mages, or factor in how they can be stubbornly self-righteous towards incorrect - or outright *dangerous* - notions, these beliefs are *very* personal in *every* regard, all of which are made easier by avoiding people. They are very inward-looking people, whose path of virtue means to benefit others even if they're the only one to walk it (blah blah Mage/Heir relationship). If the whole world doesn't agree with or understand them, if no one else can meet those standards...all of that can be *ideal* to their main-character-syndrome. For a Scribe (again, passive class), it's a lot more important people agree with them. On that note, "Forgiving you for your ignorance" is an insufferable sentiment from anyone, but Mages would rather say it once and move on; if a Scribe pulls that move, there's often a lot unresolved there, usually culminating in ghosting, goodbyes, or a ruthless demand for an "unconditional-surrender" apology. Put pressure on a Mage, and it's either consecutive condescending "sensible chuckles", or some quietly dramatic speech with zero self awareness; put pressure on a Scribe, and, at best, it's going to be cut. Hard to ever lose that Lord affect, really.

Double inverse and all that. I understand I stole/borrowed Muelin's half-title, but I was running out of words as is. I still really like the idea of the written word to contrast a Master's music, and you could keep that gimmick if you personally choose to fall back on the King/Queen dynamic I'm still fairly certain Hussie implied - or whatever third option you came up with, so long as we're clear we're all talking about class #16, Lord inverse.

I did mention awhile ago that Meulin does display an erratic Magehood I've only seen situationally in real life - Heir side gets pent up, I suppose. Even then, I think the information above still establishes what she is and isn't.

For the same reason, "Seer" doesn't really fit either. Between Prospit Scribes who say what's on their mind once and don't explore further, and the Derse Scribes who may retreat to ridicule themselves, being an "investigative seeker of unbiased truth" is surprisingly contextual aesthetic for Scribes. Real Seers are very adaptable, to the point that even their Witchy side is more flavour than it is fallback. Weaving between wills and exploring the world is all very low-upkeep for them, which is mostly because of the single most important difference between Seers and Scribes: neutrality. Scribes can look and listen as long as they want, but the interest in defining "indefensible acts" and writing off anyone who argues for them is a signature move. Seers are driven to examine people and their actions from a multitude of different perspectives, to the point that their actual disagreements

can become buried in the name of principle - not the flat silence of a Scribe stuffing back hellfire, but the distantly aforementioned issue of Seers hanging around really sketchy people and condoning far too much. The more you line up personal lives and patterns, the less any of this sticks, and absolutely needing definitive answers (especially on simple titles) is one more Scribe signature. Look, neither class is about some innate "intelligence", they just measure beliefs: how you process it, value it, preach it, that's all that's going on here. Seers have a reputation for accuracy because their beliefs are less likely to interfere with information - and, in turn, are less likely to interfere with people making very bad ideas. Scribes like their labels - given and worn, branded and banners - but beyond how that itself is antithetical to Seer thinking, or to imply it is a problem in different contexts with different stakes, nothing changes that classes are not measures of morality.

You want to be a bastion of knowledge, I made sure this name works for that too. You just don't get fluttery prophetic visions and hunches - you get stone and papyrus. According to me. It is meant with the best of intentions.

Had a long argument with someone who introduced themselves as a Seer of Void. They were insistant. They were equally insistant when they retook the extended zodiac test a day after meeting me and got "Mind". Like...like the same argument of "no this is TOTALLY who i am you're not LISTENING you don't KNOW MY STORY" to two entirely different aspects. I mean that speaks for itself, really. With what I had written, they were a kid in the candy store saying "Am I a Mage or Seer!? :D Both fit???", cherry-picking sentences I wrote while refusing to read the second or third paragraphs. I sent them my early draft of Scribes and got "You're just describing AFABs with mental disorders. >:|"...and I hope I've explained enough to show why that was a pretty definitive self-checkmate. Like I said at the start of this document, every nerve pinched is one more hint to what your class is. Truth be told, I can believe they're a Scribe of Void - would make sense if there's a Lord of Light kicking in the back, writing a thesis for why I'm a narrow-minded bigot oppressing their basic humanity with my backwards views. I've kept that conversation saved. I'm not an easy person to get along with. But I know Scribes.

In in the interest of fairness, Kankri does muddle things a little. His Seer qualities are there, but Blood's obsession with suffering and oaths makes him more accusing and intervening to his friends...aaaaaaand he's also 50% meme. Really, as a living parody of "SJW" rant-lecture types, this all segways into something I've been dancing around: Scribes are absolutely the face of that caricature, and even I am not above reductively calling them the "angry feminist personality" in certain contexts. I'm sure a few Sylphs, Pages, and even Seers have also contributed to that stereotype, but even then the bulk of that internet boogeyman is just the usual crypto-fascists trying to demonize left wing politics. I've met right-wing Scribes, there aren't any rules on who goes where, trust me.

MAGICIANS: The Witch staple of "playful fun that can fall apart when pushed too hard against reality" *does* have some commonality to compare, but to be so reductive misses the (admittidly fairly uniform) nuances and misdirection that defines the class. A Witch's aspect and identity are a personal one, balanced to a Seer's idle co-existence and calm curiosity; Witches might think they are trouble, but they are not *looking* for trouble. They can and will surf the wills of others without ever giving the inclination they'd protest, and even snapping into the Witch-Spiral-Speech_(tm) rarely errs from the central justification of "You'll be better off without me". As we've gone over, the Scribe

staple is grinding conversations to a halt to decide what is and isn't valid, where trying to let things go is difficult - just a few more pushes (real or imagined) and we're on to the Scribe-Spite-Speech_(tm) of "You just hate me for having an opinion". A Witch's personal opinions may struggle to be argued against others, but they also never have to be; even a Witch's closest confidants will rarely know all their true thoughts and hidden agendas, and Witches themselves frequently prefer it that way. Scribes don't do things halfway (at least, not without huge personal growth), and trying to play themselves off or withdraw from the world is usually because there's burnt bridges in recent memory. Like with Priests and Princes, a more malleable interpretation of oneself doesn't change how much Scribes have in common with Bards, and that's really the more apt comparison for their brand of mischief and the purpose underlying it.

I have trouble telling these two apart online. In real life, it's no contest: Scribes have a particular body language, affect in their voice, and moments of impulse, but it all gets fuzzier if they have time to collect themselves and type. Prospit Scribes and Prospit Witches blur in withdrawl, always not saying *something*. I mean I get Witches, but I've been thrown off a few times realizing that I've caught a Scribe in the same dance, who's getting increasingly irritated at not knowing the moves. They don't like losing, and too often everything is seen as a competition. I've made it no secret I like hanging around Witches - they're fun. Cute. But they're playing their own games, and if you aren't paying attention, you won't notice how often they make sure they win no matter what you do.

Scribes and Heirs mark the ends of the passive-adaptation branch - new perspectives, constructive criticism, collective problem solving. With everything described however, it should be clear why Scribes are very much their own class (and certainly not *addicted* to discontent). We can all envy an Heir whose wise guiding hand makes people look to them naturally and without contest, but that's ignoring the drawbacks and collateral. Heirs frequently mistrust their friends capabilities to the point of infantilizing them, and still hesitate so often in dire situations because the Heir impulse is seen as a false mask. Whatever identity issues a Scribe might be dealing with, they are either vague or firm, not firmly vague (as the *ideal end point* no less) as Heirs work out only the next step. Heirs are whatever the situation needs them to be, whoever their friends see them as, and breaking away from that into Mage isolation is not telegraphed, advertised, or negotiable. Scribes are, almost immutably, themselves, and trying to be there for everyone is very take-it-or-leave-it, and without the grand-exile-from-my-previous-life shtick. In the interest of fairness, Heirs are not above pulling *some* variation of diplomatic silence or "I'm still totally right but if it makes you feel better I'll move on", but, fittingly with the earlier Mage comparison, that makes the clearest tell who they are on a good day. Scribes do it all for different reasons with different ennui. The title of Heir can be enviable from its implication of righteous superiority, but the class

earns that name *precisely because* they prefer it as an implication - and if they don't, then they probably went off that Faux-Lord deep end, where the finer line to draw between them and Scribes is Heirs' unshakeable refusal to ever be seen as anything resembling a victim. Scribes never lose sight of that, and whatever warnings there are to make of self-pity, it tempers any pride they nurture at the same time.

It's popular culture that frames Heir personalities as "default good guy hero leader". Not from nothing, but it was and never will be anything definitive - just culture of yesteryear. Don't hold yourself to those standards, or think they cannot be challenged.

SERVANTS: Scribes can find themselves swimming in self-deprecation and awkward appeals, Derse ones especially so. There's a "stop and start" confidence similar to Page habits, but moreso their reputation, and you lose alot of important details if you reduce it all to "doormats" (even if we do kinda deserve it). In all the awkward attempts to help and inspire, a Scribe can easily over-mythologize their own self-loathing into a Page-y affect - yet, Pages are *still* only a notch off from Mages, and those familiar internal mechanics make for an important distinction past the optics. The lines might be a bit fuzzy between active and passive, but can't change which comes first; Pages are chronically cautiously ambitious, always chasing something and rarely making that a secret. Being a helper is at least a *little* more important than who they help, but never without a cautious balance of both - mutually beneficial, quid pro quo, "everybody wins". And that's the catch: if a Scribe is acting like a quintessential Page (a bundle of anxiety and open cowardice), then their efforts to help others *lack* that polite foot-in-the-door selfishness. If they've got a healthy ego, then you shouldn't expect all the hesitation and compromise Pages never saw *wholly* as a problem in the first place. Let's not pretend Pages aren't above stroking their ego instead of listening to those around them - but in doing so, it is a focus on personal talents in fields they're actively competing in, where the glory or benefits are to be actively reaped. If a Scribe is feeling uppity, 1: They're channeling their inner Lord, and aren't really "competing" so much as "perpetually enjoying their uncontested laurels of excellence", and 2: Unlike true Lords, they tend to weirdly gloss over their own bragging, fixating on how it all justifies and qualifies their (sometimes very unrelated) advice, gracious beacon of wisdom that they are. The journey of self-improvement for Pages is fairly route.

Don't come sniffing around my neck of the woods because "most powerful class" sounds pretty - especially if you define power as "nobody gets to tell me what to do". Sure, I'd like to cut loose and tell people to stop breathing my air, but do you know why I don't? Because it's not *constructive* - because there isn't a single soul on earth you could put in front of me that I wouldn't try to nudge to be more efficient in whatever they aspire to, more cogniscent of the broken myths they nurse. It doesn't matter how badly they've hurt me before (though I've got enough self respect I won't be too patient about it), and hell it doesn't even really matter if they're *currently* trying to hurt me; you realize how often I've openly tried to improve someone's insults against me because the only

thing I'm insulted by is how brazenly sloppy it all is? Shit, helps to know I'm not entirely alone in that.

Anyways, that kind of insistant optimism and utter fetishization of self-improvement is a Page's idea of power, and we already know what a Lord's is. As is usually the case with inversion, you're already sitting on your own solutions.

Knights are a fairly apt comparison, if in result and not ingredients. Knights and Scribes both have a (roughly) static view of what they offer to people, and the stress of keeping that up creates hard (and often rude) snaps to their inverse. It's important to state that just because these are two different classes is not to devalue the stress and strain either places on the individual - however, still two very different classes. Knights are only a notch up past Seers after all, and what they condone and accept in others is still alot; the ability to snap into Thief traits and reject abuse is still from someone who often *encourages* a little (or a lot) abuse to feed their martyring instincts, and feels natural (if not comfortable) handling a large workload. Even at their best, a Scribe's aspect is still not really a motivating, physical thing; while it's usually quite the sore spot, most Scribes are terribly lethargic at physical work, long projects, and scheduling. This overpromising narrows the type of "protector" a Scribe might want to be, usually manifesting as "I believe in you, you're perfect, end of story" sentiments - and most of their "indignant rebellion" is from people asking for something with more substance. Another tell is how they latch on to people, since Knights have a general code of conduct that even holds to complete strangers. While Knights do pick favourites from time to time, Scribes default to it, orbiting particular people with fascination and/or loyalty they rarely have time for anyone else. Besides, as we've discussed, Scribes can just as readily preach their aspect without deferring to anyone in the room, which is far more of an alien concept for Knights.

Scribes write, Knights fight. You wanna do good, I am trying my damndest to deify the good you already wanted to do. If I sound defensive, I am. Being thorough in my arguments has gotten me this far. Like I said, I'm still not too optimistic about reaching a Scribe with this. Just, fingers crossed, visceral and accurate, like I have before.

OUTLAWS: For the same reasons we've discussed in Knights, Scribes being confused as Thieves can make a bit of sense. However, this aforementioned "indignant rebellion" is against the razor-specific Scribe obligations and conniptions, meaning we are *not* looking at a Thief - we are looking at an inverted Lord, free of its few shackles. Boasting about their achievements, intelligence, and influence, Scribes put themselves at the peak of "pleased with themselves", all while considering themselves deserving of a vacation compared to a Thief *or* True Lord's volition. There are still some altruistic gestures, as Scribes haven't stopped being a centrally passive class, but it could still take awhile for them to shift to one of the other listed states, at least for long. Ultimately, we've already done a good job explaining

what Thieves are - again, they're an underdog by design, and can't "stick" a sense of superiority for longer than momentary arguments, competitions, or jokes. Their self-hatred is too engrained, and their resignations are precisely when the Knight-side is most active. Anything else to say would just be redundant at this point.

There are a lot of Prospit Scribes out there, but the reason I held off on examples is that pointing to Lumpy Space Princess or Gina Linetti is informative, but contextual.

Rogues, however, are a much finer line to draw. Prospits are easier to parse, but still worth tackling individually on their own merits. Rogues (of any sort) *do* have limits, and past that is something tired, numb, and honest; when the automatic reflex to pat their friends on the back and laugh at all their jokes...stops being automatic, or even in the cards at all. This gets close to Prospit Scribe numbness, so if those Scribes muster some clearer compassionate ambitions, you can get the two to meet in the middle quite convincingly. Of course, if you're paying attention, the actual middle is *Bards*, standing as the true hybrid between "Have you tried doing it this way maybe?" and "Do it this way or whatever I stopped caring". Prospit Rogues and Scribes can come razor thin on the delivery but not the substance. Dismissive P. Rogues are still cautious not to inconvenience others, or even imply any insult - so if it's not appeasement, it is courteous disconnection. Tender P. Scribes are less courteous and more curt, seeing principle - even a kindness - in not even humoring the concept of empty pleasantries, including any hesitation in admitting that to people. Prospitarians are straightforward, but still not always clear; true to their instincts, but not always honest in justifications. Whether it helps them or not, whether it helps *others* or not, no matter what evokes these shifting affects and in which contexts and for how long...there remain constants. Even if their feelings aren't apologetic (maybe even outright bitter), Rogues don't like to step on toes; even if they're mindful on *where* they step, Scribes do not do so softly.

Many drafts ago, the Rogue section was irredeemably inaccurate, mostly due to a great deal of time spent internalizing the wrong characteristics as "Rogue-isms". I do believe that this is, objectively, a difficult line to draw, but still one I've made worse for myself, and struggle not to pass on to others. There was no avoiding it at first, given Scribes weren't listed in the material that was otherwise working so well. but, even when I did arrive at this missing classification, I still regarded many friends and fictions as Rogues in...misplaced sympathy, I suppose. I am very critical of people who assign classpects on such a basis - but believe me, I know I'm not immune to it myself.

I keep circling Max from *Life is Strange*. Rogue, I always *want* to say, but the hard lines of "definitely" don't form in my head. It's hard to tell if it all feels like gossamer in some objective capacity, or if my instincts are still damaged from years of misinformation. In some earlier drafts, I mentioned Jess Black of *Far Cry 5* as a harder-edged Rogue - but, on revision, there's not much ambiguity outside of her being a Scribe. She is loyal, dependable, selfless, and none of that was ever mutually exclusive.

Predictably, everything is more confusing on the Derse end of things. Derse Scribes can be authoritative, ambitious, and accusatory, as much as they can be none of that for years on end. The aforementioned gremlin angle, when tempered with patience and vulnerability, hits *right* on the money to the Derse Rogue affect. Under this shared umbrella of neurotic self-examination and conscious course-correction to one's public and private face, the more obvious discrepancies - such as the ones listed in the Prospit example - do not come easily. Not that there aren't constants, and Scribes are quite concerned with what is one or not; their reasoning of why they are the way they are, the struggle to organize it, the hard limits of what they can't push past, all confessed by an over-apologizing motormouth. Hit a sore spot, and you could eke out something too sour or smug to come from a Rogue's mouth - but even before that point, those personal myths run in some important directions. All this penitence comes from someone struggling with intrusive thoughts, pulls of instinct and passion, something wild and overflowing and **commanding**. Derse Scribes can arrange their primary eccentricities into Rogue-isms, but have little hope in disguising that they are half Lord...yet, so inclined to try. Weighed down by such heavy burdens of self-loathing, as if to cancel out all the potentials (or precedent) of something prideful, wrathful, ruthless - unsubtle in the up-to-11 *insistence* of it all. Even if the details are denied or glossed over, the polar extremes of persona have more in common than what's between them; it takes a Master to even conceptualize such a slave. Pry past a Derse Rogue's bluster, and there is none of this myth-making; quiet guilt to missed opportunities, a numb wound of unworthiness, an arm's length loyalty as a mercy, a smile proportionate to blot it all out. No more, no less, nothing to prove.

It is far, far, far, FAR fucking easier to discern what class a person is, and *especially* there two, if you don't tell them what you're doing. If they know, and especially if they're familiar with this system, then you're stuck. Rogues will be Rogues, and Scribes will be Rogues to the best of their ability, trying to run ahead of where you poke and say "No no no, I TOTALLY get what you're saying, that's TOTALLY me, 150%". Honestly, trying to catch up and appease and gently nudge that kind of enthusiasm...it's, *really* the same shit I have to do with Lords, but pointing that out doesn't win you any points. I swear, there's just a flat fucking limit on what one can do with armchair psychology; that stuff will wind up vague, too easily applicable to too many situations, too easily rationalized and justified. If I can casually psychotic for a second, sometimes I just wish I could just cut the middle man and dissect someone's brain, in some desperate effort to find something inarguable to wave in front of their eyes.

Scribes like their labels, and even if you're faultless in making sure there are no biases in good or bad, right and wrong...they've still got their baggage. Like I've been saying, Derse Scribes *really* don't like having those Lordisms pointed out - like some kind of guaranteed existential panic at the mere possibility. They need to reason it away, need a pat on the back it ISN'T them and NEVER COULD BE and is MATHEMATICALLY IMPOSSIBLE, and if you don't give them that...they might move on, and, find someone who will. Course, I've been a real fucking failure in handling that...

It's two cases, two people, who feel so vivid in my mind with all this. Both were aware of my work before, and openly considered the possibility of being a Scribe, next to a few others they were excitedly pinballing around. To the first individual, I said I saw

Rogue, and they shouldn't worry - and that made it a *real fucking bitch of a situation* when I changed my mind later. It...was a whole thing, and ended poorly. Even when I acquiesced, I couldn't shake a damn near *violent* physical unease in my gut (read into that how you want). I stepped back, without much of a choice in the matter with such a constant sensation, but being left with the quip "I understand you're not mature enough to like what I have to say"...well, I take it as a parting gift to my indecisive nerves. If that same person ever reads this, I got nothing. Make what conclusions you need to.

The other? A ditto for the most part, in affect and introduction. Fresh from disaster, I was wary fast, and already found them confidently telling me they were a Rogue in a distinctly un-Rogue way. Against what I consider the common wisdom to let things lie, I stuck my foot in the door and made the best case I can...and...got somewhere. Selfishly, I admit a great deal of catharsis "winning" a do-over like that. More importantly, it seems to have offered them some peace. I wish them well, and hope that someday, somewhen, we might catch up and see how things panned out.

FAE: Scribes are a passive class, but whether primary or not, sitting on a Lord impulse at all can let them go toe to toe with a Maid's forward energy and personal faith. While this can create similar casual conversations and jabs, Scribes are a passive class, and that comes with caveats. Being able to reach people intellectually or emotionally is still a fixation, where even if they can't find reason or results to do so, idling in their own indifference can be enough. Charging forward to do things themselves is a valid alternative/compliment, yes, but even if a Scribe isn't languishing in the slightest, there's still no pull to overwork themselves for the sheer sport of it. Maids are inseparable from their gleeful, masochistic overheat, and while they can also be stressed out from trying to meet others demands (real or imagined), it's not something they even need to make that big of a deal over. They knew who they were (or at least, their preferred personal mask) since the moment their characteristics were visible, and being able to wrangle that motive with Bard corrosion is *their* long journey to untangle.

A lot of these comparisons are more theory than anything, since I'm still quite certain on certain classes being AMAB or AFAB locked, and exceptions at this point would be so rare as to only prove a rule. Still...such varying depictions of what a "strong woman" is supposed to look like. How poisonous our culture is, to limit all the options; it's not like Pages, Bards, Mages or AMAB Seers fit "correct" depictions of masculinity.

Sylphs can come close depending on the Scribe, but even without drifting to one of the previously described masks/states, they still won't match. The confusions arise from comparable high-energy tension and inevitable snaps, where helping everyone turns sour if there's too much pushback. However, much like with Knights, a Sylph's energy does tend to lead to more dedicated chores and favours - and, rather unique to them, *continuing* that work even when personal difficulties arise. Sylphs may have bite (probably too much), but it takes much longer for them to actually forfeit a job, and even longer to break a friendship; being passive aggressive is enough, where those gestures from a Scribe still reflect someone bottling up hellfire, veering closer to a direct confrontation or complete ghosting abandonment. Sylphs don't give up on people or their aspect - even if

they should, at least contextually, rather than at their absolute limits. Again, this isn't always something to envy.

ROYALS: At first glance, confusing (certain) Scribes with Princes makes a lot of sense; cynical, dry, authoritative, easily resigned, trying to win arguments with "look how much I don't care". The thing is, like their closer relation to Bards, Scribes have a destructive impulse that doesn't put themselves in their own sightlines (usually), and the extra tier of intensity means Scribes can actually outperform Princes in "I don't believe in fairies" grumpy misery. *Unlike* Bards however, the increased difficulty in sustaining the "maybe I have a point maybe I don't" affect makes them dangerously consistent in the brutal revolutionary underside, all while being a notch more brutal. To this end, Scribes can be very ruthless leaders to groups and projects - and given a difficulty/disinterest in diplomacy, they're probably damn talented to keep those kinds of positions. Dersites keep the edge, but Prospits who take this road more readily embrace contextual whimsy without worrying about a consistent reputation. Of course, it's easy to get the impression that disapproving of others and sitting on their ideas is a higher priority than results - and it probably is. Like with Princes, hostility is often meant to defend the self and one's most fragile dreams - but, unique to Scribes (and closer to Bards (obviously)), that self is not so vulnerable, or even so displayed. Heart-to-heart confessions or tender devotion can seem almost random, stumbled into, evoked by circumstance in the everpresent attribute of Scribe distractibility. If they've gone this far, they probably didn't think that was a side of them anymore - but Princes *always* know they're squishy on the inside, as we've gone over time and time again.

See, if you're going to put the Black Queen/Snowman somewhere, this would be about right. Really, calling them Queens AT ALL, this is about right - but that's cherry picking.

Grace of Wolfenstein: The New Colossus is...not popular, among most fans. Still, with hesitant trust placed in one of the essays I watched, she might be a good example of practical application with Scribe abrasion. That heckling, dismissive abuse can be weaponized strategically to push people, to weed out the fakes and the posturing, to steel them in their convictions by being their perfect opposition. Part of it feels like some perfect synthesis of Bard rambling or ranting, purer than anything they do themselves. Of course, how much is the measurement between leveraging Lord ego and just feeding it? Would anyone listen to her if she *wasn't* "Team Leader"? The Tinkerer in the Miles Morales game is a Scribe in much the same position, but the story does not make it ambiguous that her stubborn pride is screwing everyone over.

Confidence, self respect, pride...words for the same substance, in different states of damage, given and taken. Trust power and hierarchy to make it all so much more volatile.

Like with Priests and Princes, Bards provide the most interesting comparisons of similar instincts with only a few tweaks. It is in embracing the wildcard reputation of mirthful ambiguity that Bards find a stable place to judge others and work on their own projects. True, they do have their nuclear moments where they feel spurned to

take matters *very* seriously, but these are few and far between. Scribes can perform the same absolute confrontations and claims multiple times a day, which is probably why it's rather uncommon to see an actual Faux-Bard (in regards to the lackadasical grin) at work. Prospit Scribes seem to enjoy screwing people over for a cheap laugh or playing themselves off from time to time, but it's Dersites who (can, if they define themselves as such) go furthest in mimicking the routine and reputation; zany and irreverant, constantly rambling with their ideas and doubts, trying to talk over their own insecurities, hoping the effort endears without really feeling "in control" of their instincts. If you have to tell the difference, remember how Bards meander and debate around their ideas, where even the nuclear switch is usually struggling to make people "get it"; Scribes know that if they get riled up enough (which is much easier to happen), there's rarely room to talk, and that can make their humor even more of a desperate effort to avoid that.

Gremlins. Chipper, overly exciteable gremlins. Such a contrast to the more "girlboss" aesthetic of other Scribes, but that's the spectrum. Has to be, with Lords basically being synonymous with "orc".

MASTERS: We've already discussed many times how the dynamic with the Lord side defines Scribes, and how that self-assurance always boosts their stubborn arguments for any class they mimic. While we'll discuss more later, we are discussing here how Scribes actually resemble Lords...which is usually not at their best. Sure, there's a similar habit of conjouring suspiciously convinient anecdotes from whole cloth to boost one's ego and political affiliations ("and everybody clapped"/"I was called racist by some jerk on the street"), but that's intermitent - a method, not a mask. Faux-Thief Scribes show self-interest with a nominal moderation to the world outside and those responsibilities - pushing past even that is something *really* ugly. Inverted aspects often have more callousness and contempt associated with them, and take awhile to recontextualize and redeem; Scribes who go full Lord usually aren't doing so out of goodwill, and that makes them capable of the most white-hot fury a human being can have. "Authority" isn't the right word, it's just "brutality"; a scale that starts at insults and ends with throwing chairs at someone in a public space, screaming bloody murder. Lords are capable of alot of the same ugly, but even they veer to an attempt at justifications (again, at least enough to convince themselves) - it's only Scribes who can throw that entirely to the wind. Of course there's healthier Lords and Scribes out there, but we're not talking synthesis yet; only what happens when you bet all your chips on the little voice that says "I'm right, I'm a winner, I deserve everything" while the other does nothing but fuel that flagrant egomania.

Yes. You can put your hand down. Karens are Scribes. I sincerely believe with compelling evidence and witness testimony that not all Scribes are Karens, but Karens are 95% Scribes and the bottom of the barrel for Sylphs. Surely, that does a *dent* to the macho bullshit Lords cultivate? It's the same temper, same entitlement...ugh.

Confusing Scribes and Muses is highly contextual - comparing them, however, works best in this overlap anyways. They are rivals as Tier 4 passive classes, seeking to unite the world with *very* different methods, while their equally intense active inversion backs up their right to say it - or their right to unrepentant selfishness. So much done in the name of others, be it soothing or suffocating, while their personal place in the world remains mired in conniptions. Make no mistake, a Scribe's aspect can be just as potent when the words all come together and the vibe is right, all while better at actual problem solving compared to a Muse's vaugery. Yet, no one is perfect, and telling the difference between the two is a matter of watching where they flinch (the adaptive), and what they fall back towards (the attuned). Scribes are vulnerable in regards to their worldly perception, and will either learn to defend this with blunt hostility, or repeat the cliché of "You hate me for having an opinion"; their Lordly perception of who they are is - good or ill - ironclad, and it's the world's fault for being so goddamn confusing. By contrast, the Muse worldview is basically invincible, to the point their personal whims are best enacted by being smuggled through it...even if they have to distort or invent someone else's opinions to get there. If they avoid stress-ball repentance, it still doesn't mean loving themselves, making alot of disillusioned Muses bored sadists full of grudges, naked attention seeking, and whiney entitlement - "Just let me have this", so says the Priest impulse, right where it's always been. These two Tier 4 classes - or really, all 4 of them - display the harshest contrasts of white and black, poetry and pragmatism, rambling oceans and blunt bedrock. Don't look away, and you'll make out the pattern.

We can change the name "Master" class if you really want. If it'll stop the envy I keep hearing about and seeing, maybe we ought to.

You know I previously included Homestuck's brief aside that Lords and Muses are "the most active of actives" and "most passive of passives" respectively. I wonder if that's meant to say that Priests are the passive-est active class, and Scribes are active-est (activist?) passive class. Arguably, sure, I get the perspective - but that plays favourites in regards to Attunement over Adaptation, doesn't it? Even if it's not as *verbose*, Priests have a truly titanic idea of who they are, just as Scribes want to "unite the world" as much as Muses. I've been very critical on the whiplash of Scribe devotion, but it does kinda "tie" with Muses too, which has its own harsh snaps and conditions all the same. All four of them are the highest intensity at what they do, where every strength is another's weakness, and vice versa, infinitely variable depending on personal maturation and immediate circumstance.

Even besides that, just because someone's sense of self is either hyper satisfied or hyper salty, I'm not sure that makes it "more", you know? Just, louder. Loud is easy.

HERALDS: Now that we've established what Priests are, it's worth actually comparing them to Scribes side by side. As paired classes, they share a similar approach; pinnacles of adaptation both, their

primary aspect can be attached or interpreted in a manner so scattershot it almost (but *just never quite*) loses its identity entirely. Their projects, no matter how blunt or creative they are intended to be, have rough stitching between the juxtaposed sources they take as inspiration. This pragmatism is paradoxically deified of course, where its easy to conflate their personal needs with cosmic order, just like the Master classes they invert with. Callousness still permeates their worldview, making them quick to write off strangers and uncomfortably sincere in how they'd like to punish those that have wronged them - "Don't care, didn't ask", a comforting salted earth in lieu of anything of substance. There's a beauty in their individuality that no one can match, but if they keep measuring themselves to others, they'll never see it - just spite, vapidness, and sneers. If you need to tell the difference, remember that no matter how much you annoy a Priest, their passive aggressive jabs still have a Muse's patience before anything truly explosive; Scribes are prickly, and they'll either confront or withdraw much, much faster. After all, their most reactive part is where other people fit into their lives, and that isn't enough on its own...

And, you know, AMAB and AFAB, as far as I can tell. Bluh.

INVERSION (PAYOFF): I really saved the toughest one for last...

LORDS AND SCRIBES are not evil people, but they are certainly volatile, and it's rarely that difficult to see. While much of the "Priests and Muses" relationship can be comparable - the schism of visionary ubermensch and harmonious unifier, both futile and at odds with an individual's actual wants - , the paint is all scraped off. The Master voice is the most reliable, the heavy-lifter in times of doubt; all the nuance (even mystique) of our last comparison falls more flat to two individuals who most readily trust themselves, quote themselves, and weigh personal experiences over everything else. This is not always a bad thing, but it is the ability to *always* deem this "good" that makes every rough edge and stumble Lords and Scribes get into so much more obvious to the people around them. If it isn't, then you're probably so close in their orbit, so trusting of their words and friendship, that you'll be blindsided when reality comes crashing against all their assurances - that there is no golden ticket born from Lordly "intuition", or parity in a Scribe's declarations of "absolute justice". The fact of the matter is, a great deal of Lords and Scribes are cruel, petty, boastful, obsessed with popularity, willfully ignorant, and unapproachable in being anything more than this...and yet, despite *all* of that, they both on some level clearly *want* to. The Lord impulse's self image of "I'm top dog, you're jealous, fuck off", the Scribe impulse's "I made an attempt, you're just mean, fuck off", all

covering slack for the side of themselves they do not nourish, do not heal, and do not *wield*. It's unlikely this text will reach them, let alone in any way they'll agree to...but if you did make it this far, it can't hurt to take a chance.

A personal aspect **commanded**, and the passive aspect **conquered**; it is easy to forget that both are equal intensity, capable of balancing each other, even in calmer cases. Maids and Bards are such a sharp disparity of "aggressively doing everything" and "aggressively doing nothing" that their connection is still difficult to process, highlighting the dangers of going down one road entirely. Pages and Rogues seem the only ones lucid, but trying to find a balance still takes a lifetime when it's easier to retreat to the sidelines. Mages and Heirs are both the most reliable at what they do, but neither seems to immediately recognize why: balance. Intensity is a fickle bitch, and a Mage's unflinching force of will can match (and, contextually, *then some*) a Lord's bravado - after all, they sure as shit don't need to prove it, they already **know**. Just as well, Heirs have the talented influence they do by virtue of not actually *wanting* to **change** that much in the first place. Lords have such a bloated sense of self-importance that trying to build a narrative of why the world either does or should revolve around oneself is a doomed effort, while a Scribe's narrow patience hamstring their efforts to be the beacon they *legitimately want to be*. Somewhere, past all the manipulations, there's a genuine spark to Lords when they try to take people under their wing and give them the world. Somewhere, past the blowups and rudeness, Scribes are sitting on the definitive answer to who they are and where they belong in the world, just like they always wanted. Like with Priests and Muses, it's not about changing the world - it's just about knowing yourself, and giving to others as much as you're willing to give.

I mentioned Chie of Persona 4 back there, but, in all honesty, I'm holding myself back by not quoting Persona for every class here. So vivid! So accurate! And Shadow Chie might be more of what that inverted-Lord looks like past what any Scribe is willing to admit to me.

Really, so much of these Scribe schisms stem from all those blank silences and topic changes to fill the gap where the Lord voice would speak up. It's not evil. It's angry, it's rude, it's gloating selfishness - but I still don't believe it ever has to stay that way. It doesn't for every other inversion. Bizarrely, while I have more Scribes close to me than Lords, I still know a smattering who really do seem to have both sides figured out. Not often, but so long as it ain't never, there's a glint of hope through these confining boxes.

Look, this document has described a mean of Lords and Scribes - which still isn't pretty. Lords so obnoxious in what they have, Scribes so disdainful of what they don't, and both so self-assured they don't crack enough to see the picture for what it is, let alone all the snags in what they want it to be. A lot of these people aren't going to see this, or only see what they want to see, and there's nothing that can

change their minds in this lifetime and on this budget. The brass tacks remain that Lords who *do* mature, who *do* take a long look in the mirror, have learned how to embrace a side of themselves that is truly selfless. A side that is practical, content to reach only a few, and relieves the burden of trying to be everything they never chose to want; to prune the posturing douchebaggery, until the soul-of-a-poet they kept imagining themselves is finally within reach. For Scribes, all of this is on the table, like with any inversion; Lords can learn to cherish that trust and approval from others, but Scribes seeking it exclusively are leaving their inner strength untapped. The hatred, the attention-seeking, the delusional defiance of basic facts, all (as I define it) a misfire - it's peace of mind, unyielding and unshaken, right there if they want it. The more we accept and find contentment with, the easier it is to work through our differences with people, process misfortune, admit fault, and be actually genuine. It's not about being everything to everyone, or angrily lashing out at those who don't take what you're selling, it's just...well, whatever you want it to be. The world does not have to represent us, reflect us - we are our own worlds, and these two demonstrate that best before they even know it.

I can point to Johnny Silverhand's particular ending in Cyberpunk 2077, even with its cliches (which are probably part of the deal). Maybe it helps to see the arc of Steve Harrington (even if he had to get out-Lord'd by Billy to really get there). Robin is a Scribe, and I gotta say, it was a mix of emotions (mostly validation) to hear her friggin' say to Steve that they're two halves of a better person. I do like them both. I wish I had more of either class I got along with.

I did have a Lord in my life for quite a while; quiet now, he seems to have moved on, but we didn't part on poor terms. I'm grateful he spoke to me about what went on in his life, and even gave me a chance with all this. Honestly, with Lords, it really means something for them to have your back. Course I know that. I always did. Bar's high cause I know they work better when they believe what they're saying - so I can believe it too. Like every aspect, like every part of life, believing it makes it, if nothing else, true enough to matter. Something to hold to. I hope this means something too. I hope, if you are a Lord or Scribe, you can hold to it too.

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[later]

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CONCLUSION(S)

(MAYBE THE REAL KING AND QUEEN CLASS WERE THE FRIENDS WE MADE ALONG THE WAY)

Well, you did it - or you skipped to the end. That's everything, all of them, and so many of the iterations and variants that they will display. The wild wonders of the human imagination, of fiery ideals, and of the multicoloured facets of personality we are and will meet in our lives...all boiled down to a couple of one-syllable designations.

It's depressing, isn't it? Maybe it should be. Maybe it doesn't "have" to be anything. Maybe, more likely, it all feels fake - too poetic and too direct, when answers are preferred practical yet vague. There shouldn't *be* any easy answers on how people work, according to...something. "Common sense", maybe, whatever that's supposed to mean. We can go back and forth on the personality systems that exist, bring up more media examples, or bring up *less* if that makes it sound "truthier" to you. It won't change that some people aren't going to budge on this, and that they don't have to either. There were always shortcomings to text and second-hand accounts, but the more you step outside, the more you talk to people, the more the same patterns, cliches, and quotes will manifest themselves. If you still don't see it, chances are you're a class more famous for their disagreements, and there's no need to hold everything up until you alone are convinced.

At the end of the day, that is the first and last statement this document will stand by: classpects are a true, tangible thing. It's kind of stupid, sure. It's less stupid if you don't want to use the fancy flowery names, or if one were to present the information in a more plain sense. Nothing's stopping you from using a different model to present the same intensity branches, or listing different classes as "red-flag" dangerous, or all of them, or none of them. Everything has a bias, and it's difficult to separate those from the facts. But this still is the stance: classpects are a true, tangible thing. Not an opinion, not a "well it works for you", not any other half-hearted eye roll. Maybe people can grow out of them, maybe there's mismatched inversions out there, maybe there's some true genuine exceptions, but there's sure as hell more by-the-book cliches than not.

It's equally important to accept accountability, and distance the material from the immaterial, the objective from subjective.

Classpects may be a tangible "thing", but every moniker to differentiate them, the culture surrounding them, every explicit or implicit hierarchy, every assertion of danger or praise, all of it is a malleable secondary. This system is not best understood, or even "belongs", to Andrew Hussie, me, or any of the experts who impacted the former; no more than planting a flag on a mountain really makes it "yours", or discovering and naming an eye fold gives you ownership over everyone else's. These conceptions are ours, as personal as it gets, and it is honest to the facts to encourage you all to not look entirely to anyone else for a definition on how they should or shouldn't be - friends and therapists are still your best bet. This document has made its points, poetry, praise, and pointers, but this was (at its best) to encourage you on the journey; not to any one specific destination, but just warning of the pitfalls along the way. However, that is the end

of everything I am willing to stand by under any veneer of professionalism.

It's hard to know what to say, really. The farther you pry into mechanics of values and beliefs, the harder it is to make any kind of true sweeping conclusion, or even justify the need for one. Neutral information is what it is, without a point until we give it one, and I'm certainly programmed to see a beauty in that. What's important on my end is...I dunno. I can try not to project too much on to it, but I'm still going to try and make the best advice I can, built on top of those constants.

Classpects are, when you take away all the fancy speeches and poetry, terrifying - both in practice and in concept. An inescapable "everyone gets 1" mental disorder so fundamental it defines our sense of order; a trauma loop of who we had to be as kids, and our own tragic imitation of the misdeeds we witnessed. It is who we feel we have to be, can't be, the values we assign and how we wish others would fit into our story, all of it reflecting and refracting some flickering flame of something we wanted once - and probably forgot why we wanted it in the first place. We help people how we wish we'd be helped, hurt them how we fear we'll be hurt, and compete with the only values we care about. Classpects infest the root of our psyches, and follow us for decades as a reminder of abuse, weakness, pain, all with the added insult of being attached to our birth gender, which is either limiting in a way you don't think about or existential torture in a way you wish you could ignore.

And you can't get rid of it.

It's permanent. It's never going away.

It doesn't change what is.

I'm still trying to help. I like to think Hussie was too, with the mythological names and posturing that Homestuck played with. That when you peer back into the mechanical viscera of our compulsions, and take away all the romance we gave them, you can build it back with better romance. We may never be able to believe in much besides our default, but we can still aim that in a way that makes us individuals - we probably have, in ways we don't give ourselves credit for. I'm a sucker to my own delusions, but part of me really believes that we'll all find the answers we need to hear, given enough time - though I do wish more people accepted them.

I'm not a therapist. I'm an autistic Canadian kid who barely finished high school. I believe what I wrote. I checked with the professionals out there, and I'm not schizophrenic, as a few people have suggested. I'm very grateful for the friends who listen to me, who came around, who have shared their stories and helped me compile better information. I've made mistakes. I'm sure I'll make more. But I'm only one perspective anyways. Whether you write anything like this or not, I hope you all make your own conclusions. For what it's worth, I deeply hope what I HAVE written helps with things you're going through, or will go through. Maybe it just amuses you, and I'll take that. I'm at least happy doing this stuff for me, regardless of what people think. It took a long, long time to say that, and mean that.

The heavy stuff is out of the way. Just got a few loose ends, of questionable substance. You can stop here if you want, no worries. There's some more personal thoughts I want to share and...well...something personal to someone else.

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A WILD STAB IN THE DARK

(LIFE OF THE AUTHOR)

In the face of everything, all of it, Homestuck remains a comic about ships, theories, memes, and gray skin paint. While arguing about classpects is a pastime, it's weighed down by two factors: first, most people would rather pick classes that "sound" cooler rather than settle into a pre-existing role; secondly, that this is any more than fiction

is a bit of a leap. I mean I get it. Hussie's got no doctorate here, so why would they even have anything to offer? And why obfuscated behind an obtuse webcomic?

Let's answer a question with a question: how do you think they got to all this? Look, I haven't had the chance to read all the director commentary in the Homestuck print books, but I haven't heard it circulated what Hussie's process was - in fact, their early life is pretty quiet online. I've made it very clear I already presume Hussie to be a Derse Priest, but I'm also well aware they ironically (if there's any meaning to the word left) called themselves a "Waste of Space". They did, however, say that they spoke(texted?) similarly to Dave, and transitioned to Dirk's text later. Dave was always "the most natural" to them. But here's another thing: they *had* to have been exactly as analogous to Rose at the same time. I know this because I have.

Do I even have to describe a Seer of Light, or have we all been paying attention? To study and steady, in unbiased observation, the narratives and (presumed) destinies of others; their stories and conclusions, good and bad, and without being held to the same grip of those narratives. Important, sure; more important, Rose is characterized early on as someone who obsessively psychoanalyzes her friends, playing therapist and studying their behavior (a trait mostly downplayed as things go on, which rarely "fires" like a Chekov's ought to). Without ever meaning to, I found myself doing the same in an effort to find the truth in this mess of medieval cosplay; prodding others with questions, careful not to push too far or give too much away, playing it off with a derse touch of self deprecation when things got awkward. Course, I'm still a Page, and a nervous wreck doing all of that...but how else would Hussie have *figured out* everything they did? Would the guy not have the reputation of mysterious psychoanalyzing, much to the chagrin of friends? Could half of those reading RESIST the curiosity of cracking their friends heads open, and studying the intricate repeating patterns of conviction and compulsion?

It goes further than that. To consider oneself a Knight isn't a terrible assessment for someone trying to encourage others with a blunt, direct and dry efficiency - an expectation it's what they need, even if no one asked. Hell, wouldn't even be that far to regard one's own "time-related needs" as something to sacrifice, too selfish to consider. Not necessarily the same way as a Knight would...but close. I said earlier I believed Lord English to be an analogy of the worst characteristics; *if so*, is an Heir of Breath not alarmingly similar to an Heir of Void? Breath and Void move in similar ways, though forgiving and forgetting a problem have different applications and a stark contrast of nobility; moreso, the gaslighting of a truly dangerous Priest had a darker, more cautious edge...but Equius is the Derse one of the two, wasn't he? John was more honest. Maybe Andrew hoped they were, at least once.

And if all 3 of these states are viable, and it's obvious you aren't running any of the same "scripts" as your friends, then a Witch of Space's personal malleability of creative expression is RIGHT on the money, ain't it?

Now like I said, I can relate to Rose, and that is from the circumstances. There's reason to guess, maybe, hypothetically, the beta kids are a conglomerate of Hussie's childhood ennui - but the Alpha kids? REALLY look at the Classpect system, see the potential to "resolve" people of avoidable internal strife, and you wind up in a pretty similar place. Stand for yourself, **exploit fantasy and delusion available to you optimally**. Everyone around you depressed? **Fight the world until it resembles the stability you want**, even if you can barely contain it under the guise of negotiation. They get caught up with the rest of their lives, who they think they are and how the world works? **Tell them to forget. Tell them to let go**. Not an Heir's touch...something more to risk, something more heartfelt and vulnerable, even if it's more honest that the problem hasn't gone away - you're just saying **it doesn't matter, and it doesn't have to a part of your story**. They get huffy? Jesus, why? You just offered them hope, life, and eased the journey there. Yeah, maybe they've got **stubborn gut feelings about who they are**...but isn't that enough to make one irritated, even if you try to pretend you're just nobly sacrificing for them? Really, they're gonna get passionate and say being misread is just "who they are"? You know better. You know them better than they know themselves, and you've got the paperwork to prove it, the ungrateful idiots. Rip that band aid off - **destroy it**.

It's the perfect recipe for transforming your friend group into an unstoppable gnostic-themed unit of self-actualization and purpose - until you actually cook the recipe. It turns out, if you try to condense all these ideas of perfection and spiritual decadence into a concentrated meat-and-candy package, then force feed that to someone, the results might scare you.

Maybe real people work differently than that.

I've had to learn that. And now I find myself wondering, precariously, if Hussie went through these exact same paces. I followed their notes, tried to draw a better map, and wind up walking through their exact footsteps...but did they turn around here?

The Cherubs are, beyond a shadow of a doubt in my mind, Hussie themselves. A religious homage, analogies for the split fanbase, a villain ex machina, maybe that too - but I'll put money on it being Andrew first and foremost. Priests are the direct inverse of a genuine Muse, which doesn't make for a bad metaphor for inversion given how "timey" they are (if explaining why everyone thinks Muses and Lords are the inverse...). And does that not raise a hundred fiery questions on Calmasis, the enigmatic pseudo-union of the two, drawn almost identical to Hussie's own comic insert - irrelevant to the main comic beyond Hussie's comic self dressing as them? Of course, while Priests do emulate Lords if they do nothing but ramp themselves up, it's imperfect to the real thing - they are dispassionate, dishonest (like, moreso), and disguised. I already covered that. Maybe now it makes more sense: 8 human faces, all with struggles and doubts, all roles used up a twisted theatre show - both webcomic, and perhaps a real human life. Behind it all, a chimeric demon of 4 evils: a ruthless monster, a soulless robot, a manipulative pervert, and an insane clown who thinks he's a king.

But what to make of it then? Caliborn takes over a body of two, but the other side still wins in the end? The kids...still, make it, and make their own world, are the dreambubbles still analogous to fanworks? Homestuck is just Hussie(x4) vs Hussie + Hussie(x4) + Hussie(x4)? Well, to be fair, it would explain why they wanted people to name the characters themselves. What about all the characters dating each other and going through their own business? What is the natural progression of these impulses made into self-sustaining characters with arcs in the purpose of entertaining fiction, and what is autobiographical confessions?

I have no answers to where the lines are, I'm afraid. I can say with relative certainty (and I suppose it's your call how much you believe me, which is fair) that Hussie's self-insert antics are the tip of a truly imposing iceberg of mindful self indulgence, but I cannot tell you their full intention. At the same time, we're not idiots here - we can establish a few things. That they finished this. That past the jokes, it meant something to them. That they did, at least once, care about using this system to help people; that might require some faith, but I truly don't see how he could've written *that story* with the Alpha Kids, and not been in the position I (and perhaps someday, you) are in. The direct approach has limits - the Muse won. Hussie gave everyone the toolset, but skipped half the labels and burned the instructions...now I have the audacity to think that cowardice, and publicly admit it's wisdom I only *hope* is misplaced.

They weren't a licensed professional, sure, but that only explains the format - not the point. Maybe they thought spelling it out was unsustainable, and danced around it to pique curiosity without lecturing? Maybe they just wanted to tell their story, broken dreams and all? As an old friend of mine used to say, "a little of column A, a little of column B."

So here's a thought: how much SHOULD we care what Hussie says?

<https://blog.giovanh.com/blog/2020/10/03/the-hiveswap-fiasco/>
<https://blog.giovanh.com/blog/2021/01/14/hussie-exploited-the-odd-gentlemen-backers/>
<https://archive.vn/CgeSz>
...and of course, the Sarah Z debacle.

What affection I have for Homestuck these days comes from how long it's been since I've been reminded of Hussie's words, let alone hearing them again. I can gloss over the bad takes and problematic elements (even if I shouldn't), but it's this skeezy sensation towards the author's prescence that pushes me the most. Sort of silly from a certain perspective, but it really is the sum of our inevitable parasocial relationships in this modern world to feel an attachment to these figures without knowing them; still, even your real friends can dissappoint, so maybe we're all shit as a species. I accept the folly. Accept my brain is malleable and fallible. It's just dissappointing to watch someone veer into duplicitous autocracy after writing a story about knowing better. Is this a relapse, or was their takeaway more a compromise than I hoped? All I know is, the more I dig in to quotes and such, the more I recognize. I hope, maybe, you will too - from people you know, people I've spoken of, and maybe people you are.

At the end of the day, despite *everything*, Homestuck is a pretty great webcomic. Hussie, despite the kind of fickle attention span that's doomed so many of that archetype trying to write a grand epic, made something (with more help than they'll admit) worth the investment, while finding fame and fortune. Maybe that changed them. Maybe they never changed. Regardless of intent, people have and always will take what they like about Homestuck, as a smorgasbord of ideas and concepts that invites collaboration and wonderment, a tribute to the endless potential of the human soul. If the bigshot themself comes out of their hole and gives a tell-all, would it matter? Hell, I wouldn't even believe most of it at this point. They talk alot about the comic being out of their hands, but I can promise you all, it is even more than they know.

Hussie is (or at least was) a genius - and *alot* of other things you can criticize the guy for, not least of which the embarrassing retaliations against those criticisms. While I don't regret harsher words I've said in earlier forms of this document, I've been reconsidering what words I'll stand by here, if only for my own sense of decorum. True, there is a non-zero chance Andrew themself might read this...but, I still figure it does me good to not worry so much about whatever they get up to; again, makes it alot easier to enjoy Homestuck that way, no matter what form it takes. Still, without condoning any of these antics or controversies, I can still confidently offer a sincere thank you for the work Andrew Hussie did, and the positive impact it had on my life. Hopefully, to those reading this, and certainly those in a similar position of dissatisfaction with the fandom, one can find solace in salvaging and surviving. It's not perfect. Nothing ever is, because nothing can be perfect to everyone. So take what you can from Homestuck in the weaving of your own story, trash the rest, and don't be surprised that someone else focused on something else - even if they're still *wrong* about classpects.

SOME WORDS IN CLOSING

(WE'LL MEET AGAIN, DON'T KNOW WHERE, DON'T KNOW WHEN)

I've rewritten this section many, many times. I've had ideas on what I wanted the closing statement to be before I even finished writing all the classes - hell, before I discovered (rediscovered?) the bonus two. I already released an earlier version on Reddit in a haze, and it's still nagging at me that it wasn't good enough. I've redone everything, and I wonder how much I'll still tinker with, and how much I'll come back to these words as well. Maybe I'll trash it all again - I mean you could fill a book just with all the different epilogues I've written here.

Alot of it was about my dad. It's hard for it not to be. Priest of Void, always giving you the reason you'd believe for the whim he wanted. I'm what he asked for - just, not what he wanted. I'm wimpy, I'm indecisive, but...there's just limits on how much one can justify reckless destruction, how much good you can make of it. He asked for rules. He always justified his hypocrisies with this illusion of structure, invented a method to the madness that kept changing. I listened, and I clearly heard something right - Page of Time, Rogue of Space, believe in violence and fight beliefs. I'm the sum of his excuses, as broken as his explanations, the mimicry of his posturing made genuine. Hell, my brother's still an Heir of Breath, what does that say?

I'm trying to define myself, and I've ended up with the words of someone who probably isn't that different. How much of these ideas do I own? How much do I want to own? I get so swept up in ideas of others, but I hate being pulled in so many directions at once when I can't find equilibrium - there's a truth in there, something pure, something Priests don't have. Even then, I've had my soul up for sale too often, and given myself over to people I shouldn't, trying to be everything *they* wanted. If I'm left to my own devices, my thoughts don't make sense even to me, and I don't even feel like I exist. There's just some middle ground there, where everything's bouncing around but I can take stock of what I'm trying to put together.

It's why the poetry is here. It's the only time I've ever written poetry. I've blanked, every other time, and freaked out. I can academically do a rhyming scheme, but it's cold and mathematical - it's not me. I recognize what's not me because there is a me, and most of that's best expressed in smashy violence poetry. I need that. It, and the whole style of the Brochure. The scattershot, the disembodiment, the depersonalization. That's me. I really do hope this helps people, but I need this for me too.

Look, Classpects aren't all we are - they're important, sure, but like mental disorders and physical disabilities, they're just things we live with. I think it makes more sense to romanticize them, because they're so often our mechanism *to* romance, you know? But

hesitantly, not so much we don't understand the burden. Just please understand, I meant everything I said. When we understand they're impulses, we can make them more; the more we understand they're subjective, the better we can "sell" other people on them.

Isn't that all life is? Negotiation? Or is that projection on my part? Am I wrong? We're surrounded by thinkpieces, advertisements, propaganda, literature, tombstones, all fighting each other on "What it's all about". It's a fight because you can win if someone agrees with you - apparently. If those are the terms, why are we fighting? If we can believe anything we want, why believe anything at all? Nihilism is its own metanarrative, as much as anything. A conclusion implies a problem, implies a process, implies *alot*. Why the hell do we keep overhyping some "search for meaning"? What if there was an objective truth to life? Call it God, call it whatever - what if it *didn't* work for you? What if it made you uncomfortable, what if you weren't a part of it? Who the fuck decides anything? For the liars selling anything to get ahead, what other narrative are they buying where it's worth it? Money and power? Who the fuck are you trying to impress?

We all have opinions, and reality is the only dream we all share without a choice. It's not everything, but it is the staging ground. It's where we meet people, where we share the new, where we argue around the inarguable. Some people act like all that matters is materialism, money, sex, and some people act like all that matters is sticking your head in the clouds - isn't there such a thing as balance? Can't we just make use of what we have instead of trying to decide what's "evil"? The opinions I've laced this document with are "be excellent to each other", "treat others the way you want to be treated", and "treat yourself the way you treat your friends". I am willing to stand by those, certainly to the friends I care about. I ain't going to take over the world with it, and I don't plan to. It is just not worth the hassle, and it doesn't solve anything.

Look, just stop worrying so much, okay? Don't fall apart because someone doesn't agree with you, and don't fall apart yourself just because you might be wrong - not even a prideful thing, you could even be wrong about how bad you think you are. Don't run from the ugly. Don't run from pain, and suffering, and "uncomfortable" thoughts. We learn, we brace for it, we make a choice what we will or won't fight through, and who we'll fight for or against. There is always a choice, and we don't need some pretty idea of "objectivity" to back us up, when all it does is distract us from our responsibility. We choose what we believe, and without some "universal good", we're stuck trying to justify ourselves to the people we want to justify it to. We are our own Gods. We can be good ones, and it's up to you to decide what that is. Certainly, at least, I can try and push you to not run from the happiness you're scared to accept, or screw people over in a way you'll feel guilty about later. That if we cannot accept the things we can't change, that someone else might have the tools to do so; that if we don't accept the way things are, that we could ever notice what we can overpower.

At the risk of projecting, we're all mimics. We all take ideas from other people, and our classpects are shared at our discretion. We hold onto wisdom from other mouths, and you can still feel the heat from when it burned in their hearts. Same with stories, same with old books, same with this dumb document. We don't need them *with* us to be a *part* of us, and that is a fact.

Face tomorrow unafraid.